

INCOMPLETE DEMOCRATIZATION AND CONFLICT: THE ROLE OF
TERRITORY AND NATIONALISM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of incomplete democratic transitions on international peace and security. Since the end of the Second World War, the number of democracies has seen a five-fold increase. Countries do not, however, magically transform into fully institutionalized democracies overnight. I ask how ongoing democratic transitions impact the likelihood of international conflict and the ability of states to resolve disagreements peacefully. I advance a nuanced argument, suggesting that democratization leads to belligerent foreign policies, but only in contexts where territory is a salient point of contention between states. The presence of territorial issues allows political actors to use nationalistic rhetoric and, therefore, they will pursue hardline policies vis-à-vis other states. I find support for my argument in statistical analyses, using existing data on territorial issues and militarized disputes in an innovative way, as well as qualitative case studies. Notably, the process described here does not appear to be present when states contend over non-territorial issues, supporting the argument that there is a unique link between democratization, territorial issues, and nationalism

To my family for their unwavering support

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Chapter 1: Democratic Transitions and Conflict

"Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere."

- *President William J. Clinton*

"I've got great faith in democracies to promote peace. And that's why I'm such a strong believer that the way forward in the Middle East, the broader Middle East, is to promote democracy."

- *President George W. Bush*

1.1 The Introduction

In May of 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama responded publicly to recent events in the Middle East and North Africa where a series of protests, both violent and non-violent, had attracted much of the world's attention for the preceding six months. Turmoil started in Tunisia in December of 2010, resulting in the ouster of President Ben Ali, and spread rapidly throughout the region. President Ben Ali's counterpart in Egypt, long-serving President Hosni Mubarak, was the second leader to be removed from power in just a few months. In his speech, President Obama declared that the breakdown of authoritarian regimes was a welcome development and that the promotion of political reforms should remain a "top US priority that must be translated into concrete actions and supported by all the diplomatic, economic, and strategic tools at our disposal" (Obama 2011). President Obama was not the only one to speak with optimism about the Arab Spring and the events that were taking place across the region. Scholars, commentators, and international organizations all called for action in places such as Syria (Slaughter 2012) and Libya (United Nations 2011), as well as active engagement with political processes in countries across the Middle East to aid what had become known as the Arab Spring (Pollack 2011).

The recent breakdown of authoritarian governments across the Middle East and North Africa does not constitute an isolated series of events. Since the Second World War, the number of democracies in the international system has increased by a factor of five. In general, public opinion in the United States and the West has perceived this as one of the most positive developments in the world since 1945. This attitude has been reflected in foreign policy agendas, such as foreign aid for democracy promotion, and in public proclamations by government officials representing Western countries. President Obama's embrace of democracy promotion as an integral part of American foreign policy was therefore not exactly a novel position taken by an American President in the post-World War II period. During the Cold War, the United States viewed support of democratic and anti-communist regimes as an important component in the foreign policy struggle against the Soviet Union and its fellow travelers. After the Cold War, the United States continued to maintain similar policies, promoting democracy and human rights around the globe, even though the great antagonist in the East had collapsed.

President Obama's two immediate predecessors in the Oval Office, as the quotes at the beginning of this chapter illustrate, both spoke glowingly about democracy promotion and the impact that a more democratic world would have on international peace and stability.¹ This attitude was perhaps especially apparent in the case of George W. Bush, for whom the spread of democracy and regime change became an integral part of his administration's foreign policy agenda. President Obama's successor in the Oval Office, President Donald J. Trump, was an outspoken critic of American engagement abroad during his presidential campaign and his winning the presidential

¹ Presidents Clinton and Bush are not the only American officials to have made claims along these lines. President Reagan proclaimed that governments that value individual liberty will exercise "restraint" and "peaceful intentions" in their foreign policy (Reagan, June 9, 1982 as cited in Doyle 1986). James Baker, Secretary of State under the first President Bush, spoke about pursuing a foreign policy based on democracy and free markets with other states (Baker 1995, as cited in Russett and Oneal 2001).

election appeared to herald a more cautious, less-interventionist approach to foreign policy. However, even this administration has not strayed too far from established foreign policy conventions of previous administrations. As an example, the Trump administration appointed Mark Green, a firm believer in democracy promotion abroad, to head up the United States Agency for International Development where has been given the freedom to pursue that agenda (Lifhits 2017).

The optimism and enthusiasm surrounding democracy promotion can be traced to two distinct sources. The first is a political philosophical preference in Western liberal democratic countries for government forms in which citizens can hold their political representatives accountable, where citizens and organizations can freely express their opinions, and where certain (liberal) rights are safeguarded. Although many Westerners would agree that this is a persuasive argument, as evidenced by support for these values and attempts to spread them around the globe, it is also an inherently normative position. Are these values or regimes better than others that we find around the globe? Based on what criteria? These are questions not suitable for empirical evaluation and analysis by political scientists through testable hypotheses and data. Our colleagues in philosophy are much better equipped and have the appropriate training to deal with this type of questions.

If we move away from normative questions surrounding regime types, is it possible to uncover (positive?) observable effects of democratic governance? The other argument in favor of democracy promotion answers this question in the affirmative and suggests that democratic governments are more peaceful than their authoritarian counterparts. This proposition is an empirical statement that scholars within political science and international relations have expended much effort on in their attempts to evaluate its merits. With certain caveats regarding what

constitutes a democratic state, two mature democracies have never fought an outright, full-scale war with each other.² Political scientists, international relations scholars, politicians, and others have repeatedly pointed to this empirical finding when making the argument that waves of democratization are welcome phenomena and that they will produce a more stable and peaceful international system. The claim that democracies can maintain peaceful relationships among themselves is often uncontested in the scholarly community and most scholars appear to have accepted this as an empirical fact.³ However, transitions from authoritarian government to democracy do not take place overnight. States that attempt to transition to democracy will inevitably find themselves in a transition period during which democratic institutions, norms, and traditions have not yet firmly taken root in society. What do we know about the impact of the transitions themselves on the behavior of states in international politics? More specifically, how does the presence of ongoing or incomplete democratic transitions impact the prospects of international peace and stability? These are the questions that this project attempts to provide some answers to and, in the process, improve our understanding of international politics.

1.2 The State of the Literature

A survey of existing literature on democratic transitions and international conflict produces two lasting impressions. The first is that there is, perhaps surprisingly, a dearth of scholarship on the topic. Although much time and effort has been spent on debating the merits of the democratic

² There are those who argue that this result merely is a product of the way in which commonly used datasets treat and code democracy. With slight alterations to the way in which democracy is coded, certain wars could be considered as having taken place between two democracies. Russett (1993, Chapter 1) specifically addresses several wars that are frequently cited as wars between democracies, arguing that this is in fact not the case.

³ There are those who have directly disagreed with these conclusions. David Forsythe (1992) argues that democracies are not entirely peaceful in their relations with each other. Michael Haas (2014) has been scathing in his critique of the democratic peace as a research program. Recently, other scholars have also raised questions about the true source of the peace among democracies. Gibler (2012), for example, argues that the peace among democracies is a product of the fact that those states have managed to settle territorial disagreements prior to becoming democracies.

peace-proposition, scholars have only devoted a fraction of the time to democratic transitions. Although this project is related to the literature that has been produced on the democratic peace, democratic transitions represent a qualitatively distinct class of cases. In other words, these states are not stable, mature democracies. Neither are they ideal authoritarian dictatorships. All democracies go through some transition period and their behavior during that transition period merits attention by scholars studying international politics. The second impression that one is left with after surveying the literature on democratic transitions and conflict is the fact that, among those who have paid attention to the topic, there is no apparent consensus. Although the empirical finding that dyads of democratic states are manifestly better at maintaining peaceful relations among each other remains largely uncontested, some scholars have prominently argued that periods of democratic transition can heighten the risk of conflict.

In perhaps the most compelling case for the potential dangers of processes of democratization, Mansfield and Snyder (2005) argue that the domestic political context during a process of democratization, in the aftermath of the breakdown of an authoritarian regime⁴, is conducive to belligerent foreign policies in a way that makes democratizing states distinct from established democracies. In democratizing states, nationalism holds tremendous appeal as a tool that elites can wield in pursuit of political power. Nascent democratic institutions in these states are unable to restrain the belligerent tendencies that are produced by nationalism, which in turn have detrimental effects on the prospects of international peace and stability. Mansfield and Snyder provide support for this argument through statistical analyses as well as through case studies such as the case of the former Yugoslavian Republic, where Slobodan Milosevic used demagogic rhetoric about Albanian nationalism in Kosovo to win the backing of Serbian nationalists.

⁴ See section 3.2 for a discussion on types of breakdowns and reasons why transitions are initiated

Mansfield and Snyder forcefully argue (Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 2002, 2005, 2009) that, even though consolidated and stable democracies are more peaceful, their argument and findings should give pause to attempts at promoting democracy around the world. Leaders and policymakers who push policies of democracy promotion should stop and contemplate if we fully understand the forces that processes of democratization can unleash in the countries where it takes place. Mansfield and Snyder's argument was met with a heavy dose of skepticism by other scholars who maintained that we should expect any movement toward higher levels of democracy to either have a pacifying impact on state behavior or no effect at all (e.g., Braumoeller 2004; Narang and Nelson 2009; Oneal and Russett 1997; Ward and Gleditsch 1998).

1.3 The Motivation

The Arab Spring illustrates, in the most vivid way possible, that authoritarian regimes can often quickly and unexpectedly meet their demise. How do these democratic transitions impact the foreign behavior of states and how should we expect them to interact with other states in the international system? The two sides of the scholarly debate on the topic have been unable to reach anything resembling a consensus on the topic. Unfortunately, this state of affairs also means that the scholarly community have little readily available advice to provide to policy makers and the international community. A better understanding of the foreign policy behavior of democratizing states would help scholars predict international behavior and foreign policy patterns as well as our ability to provide guidance for policy makers on how to best invest their resources and efforts if they want to aid states that find themselves in democratic transitions. Another primary concern is our lack of an understanding of how efforts to promote democratic reforms by international organizations and Western states affect the prospects of peace and stability. Although it might be normatively desirable policy to pursue policies of democracy promotion, we also ought to have a

better understanding of what the impact of those policies are. Regardless of whether a democratic transition emerged from external or internal pressure, we currently do not have an answer to the question of how the presence of ongoing or stalled democratic transitions heighten or lower the risk of conflict between states. Neither do we fully understand the conditions under which incomplete democratization can affect the prospects of peace and stability or whether leaders of democratizing states less likely to attempt to seek peaceful resolutions to international disagreements. Improving our understanding of incomplete democratic transitions and how they relate to foreign policy decisions would aid international organizations, states, and policymakers to decide on the proper course of action when they are investing resources to promote democratic reforms around the globe. In this project, I provide insights by identifying specific situations in which democratization makes belligerent foreign policies more likely and hamper the ability of states to find peaceful resolutions to their disagreements.

1.4 The Argument

The theoretical argument that I introduce in Chapter 3 attempts to explain why democratic transitions heightens the risk of conflict in certain contexts. This argument moves beyond existing arguments between Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, on one side, and their critics on the other, by highlighting the context in which democratic transitions take place. Mansfield and Snyder (e.g., 2005) suggested that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of both domestic and international conflict. The main thrust of their argument is the claim that states in transition toward democracy lack coherent, institutionalized political institutions. Institutions in these states are therefore unable to manage the intensified, fierce domestic competition for power that occurs after a breakdown of authoritarian regimes. In this setting, old and new elites seek pathways through which they can mobilize mass support to help them acquire control of the government. Mansfield

and Snyder argue that one promising way of mobilizing support is through making a nationalistic appeal in which a party or leader is put forward as the true representative and hero of the nation. Often, this might result in a bidding war between different groups that all see an opportunity to win power after the demise of the previous authoritarian regime. Per Mansfield and Snyder, the threat of leaders turning to nationalism and hardened foreign policy positions is ever-present in nascent democracies and the reason why we should expect democratizing states to be at a heightened risk of international conflict.

The ability of leaders to make an effective nationalistic argument in the context of democratic transitions is non-uniform across democratizing states. Not all democratic transitions lead to international conflict and many states are able to complete a smooth and relatively frictionless transition from authoritarianism to democracy. I argue that there are certain contexts in which we should expect democratization to hamper the prospects of peace and exacerbate the risk of conflict. Although I take my starting point in the theoretical framework introduced by Mansfield and Snyder, I show that their argument and story is incomplete. Is it possible to identify situations where democratization might be especially likely to lead to more belligerent and uncompromising foreign policies? I believe that we can answer this question in the affirmative. There are certain contexts in which political candidates are especially prone to find that nationalism is an efficient strategy that they can use to mobilize support behind their cause. Effective nationalistic arguments cannot easily be invented out of whole cloth in situations where there are no preexisting conditions for a nationalistic appeal. The use of nationalism as a political strategy is therefore available to some but not to all. In other words, Mansfield and Snyder's causal story only works in certain situations and contexts. It is not possible to fabricate nationalistic sentiments

within a population out of thin air and whether a population is susceptible to a nationalistic appeal will depend on a host of different conditions.

Political actors can use nationalism as a political strategy in situations where there are external threats against the state or the nation. Specifically, I suggest that this is the case in contexts where territorial issues are salient and part of the political debate. Although it should be recognized that nationalism is a complex and multidimensional concept for which it is difficult to pin down a universally agreed upon definition, most definitions include a territorial component. Nationalism is intertwined with the idea of self-governance and sovereignty that is associated with a territory of historical, religious, or political significance. Examples abound. French nationalism is tied to the area of Europe in which the French people today reside. The peasants of the region were famously (infamously) turned into Frenchmen. To be English is associated with a specific part of an island off the coast of continental Europe. The English identity is distinct from a Scottish identity which is associated with a different part of the same island. The British have at times been accused of being overly nationalistic and patriotic, leading to the creation of the derogatory term ‘Little Englander’.

Scholars, and others, have identified certain territory and lands that are tied to nationalism and nationalistic arguments, describing these as homelands that have a special meaning to the nation and the common identity of a people. Situations where the territory of a nation is under threat, or contested, are those in which political actors will find it easy to make a nationalistic argument to mobilize support behind their bid for power. Taking this argument seriously provides us with one answer to the question of when we should expect incomplete democratization to lead to belligerent foreign policies: it is likely to be the case when territorial issues are salient and part of the political debate because that is when political actors will be able to use nationalistic

strategies to mobilize support behind their bid for power. The political competition that is unleashed by democratic transitions, in which different political actors have a chance at acquiring political power, increases the chances that actors will use nationalistic arguments based on territorial disagreements with other states.

1.5 The Evidence

In chapter 5, I use the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) dataset to identify cases where states have explicit and competing territorial claims with other states. This universe of cases allows me to examine the impact of incomplete democratization on the ability of states to successfully manage their territorial disagreements. The analysis in chapter 5 shows that incomplete democratization heightens the risk that states with contending territorial claims will experience international conflict in the form of militarized interstate disputes and full-scale wars. In addition, I also find that parties to territorial claims are less likely to seek peaceful resolutions to their disagreement when an incomplete democratizer is present in the claim-dyad. These results are robust to several different changes to model specification and provide support for the first three hypotheses that are introduced in chapter 3.

Having established that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of international conflict when states have territorial claims, I examine whether this holds true across other issue types. In chapter 6, I provide evidence using the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID dataset), and show that the presence of incomplete democratization makes it more likely that militarized interstate disputes will escalate to war. Using the same dataset, I am also able to separate out the effect of incomplete democratization across different issue types. I can therefore examine whether the effects of incomplete democratization that we observe are unique for territorial disputes or if they also are present when states compete over other types of issues. In line with the argument

made in chapter 3, the empirical analysis finds that incomplete democratization only heightens the risk of escalation to war for disputes over territory and not for disputes over other types of issues. In short, the weight of the evidence suggests that incomplete democratization hampers the ability of states to maintain peaceful relations with other states, or exacerbate existing disputes, when territory is a salient issue.

1.6 The Contribution

The theoretical argument, accompanied by hypotheses and empirical analyses found in later chapters, suggests that there are specific situations in which we should expect incomplete democratization to impact the foreign policy behavior of states. Incomplete democratization can heighten the risk of international conflict and promote belligerent, uncompromising foreign policies in certain contexts. This study and its findings have a few different implications. Four of these are worth mentioning here. First, I shed light on how processes of democratization affect foreign policy behavior of states. This advances our knowledge of how democratization relates to conflict and advances the scholarly debate on the topic. Existing arguments, such as that of Mansfield and Snyder may be compelling, but their quest to establish a general relationship between democratization conflict has told a partially incomplete story. In this project, I move beyond their work by identifying one context, that of external threats in the form of salient territorial issues, in which incomplete democratization exacerbates the risk of international conflict. I also introduce evidence in support of the corollary to this claim: incomplete democratization does not always lead to more belligerent relationships between states in the international system. When states get involved in disagreements over non-territorial issues, such as economic policy disputes, I do not find any evidence for the thesis that democratization heightens the risk of international conflict. For the scholarly community, this study helps advance

our understanding of the relationship between incomplete democratization and foreign policy behaviors.

Through this project, I also contribute to the broader research program on territorial issues in international relations. In my move away from the existing literature on democratization and conflict, I incorporate insights from the research program on territory in international relations. These insights help me develop a more nuanced argument that provides us with guidance on when incomplete democratization might be dangerous. The way in which states handle territorial issues, and the link between territorial issues and conflict, has been at the center of this research program since its inception. The research program on territory has seen fervent activity in the past two decades, with scholars exploring the different ways in which territory in international politics is related to international conflict, domestic repression, militarization, and a wide range of foreign policy behaviors. This study adds to the issue research program by examining a specific factor, ongoing democratic transitions, and how it impacts the ability of states to manage and peacefully resolve their territorial disagreements. Specifically, I show that the presence of incomplete democratization in the international system worsens the prospects of finding peaceful resolutions to territorial disagreements. Furthermore, incomplete democratization also increases the likelihood that states will fight over territorial issues.

Thirdly, the rapid expansion of democracies in the international system since the end of the Second World War has raised questions about the impact of democratization. International relations scholars have primarily been interested in democratization as it relates to conflict (e.g., Mansfield and Snyder 1995), states ability to cooperate with each other, or topics such as human rights protection (Moravcsik 2000). This study contributes to the literature on democratization by examining the potential impact that these types of processes have on foreign policy behaviors in

specific contexts. I accomplish this by considering how actors that operate within processes of democratization react and are able to use their context to advance their ambitions.

Lastly, the rise of anti-immigration, isolationist political actors around the globe has renewed concerns about nationalism among the public, politicians, and scholars alike. The time that has passed since the end of the Second World War, and perhaps especially the period after the end of the Cold War, has been characterized by more intensive international cooperation, a sharp increase in international treaties and agreements, more trade, intercultural exchange, and a world in which populations of some states have started to consider war obsolete. Should an increased in nationalistic sentiments around the globe, or attempts by politicians to use nationalism, be a cause for concern? The implications of the theory that I have presented here suggests that panic in the West over the rise of populist actors has been drastically exaggerated. Although actors might attempt to use nationalistic arguments to further their ambitions, the argument that I have advanced here highlights the fact that effective and persuasive nationalism cannot simply be made up out of whole cloth and that political actors that attempt to use nationalism to advance their agenda, in the absence of a territorial component, will not seek violent international conflict.

1.7 The Plan

In the next chapter, I present a discussion of the literature related to the democratic peace, democratization, and conflict. Specifically, I discuss the literature on democratization and conflict that started with Mansfield and Snyder's first published study on the topic in the early 1990s. This discussion highlights the distinction between mature democracies and transitioning democracies and suggests why the logic of the democratic peace-tradition is not applicable to states that find themselves in a democratic transition. It also becomes evident that current debate regarding the impact of incomplete democratization on foreign policy behavior has not adequately considered

when and where, theoretically, that we should expect democratic transitions to impact foreign policy decisions.

In Chapter 3, I draw insights from the issue research program and the role of territory in international politics to identify situations where democratization should be expected to produce more hardline, belligerent foreign policies. I also present several testable hypotheses that are drawn from the theoretical argument. Chapter 4 introduces the main variables, their operationalization, and descriptive statistics of the data that is used in the empirical analyses. Chapters 5 and 6 present findings and evidence aimed at evaluating the hypotheses presented in chapter 3. Chapter 5 presents evidence suggesting that incomplete democratization makes it more likely that territorial claims will experience international conflict and less likely that leaders will attempt to find peaceful resolutions to their disagreements. In the following chapter, I further show that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict in militarized disputes where territory is the topic of contention but not in disputes over other types of issues. Specifically, using the MID dataset, I find that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict when states have disputes of territorial issues but do not find the same effect when states contend over policy or regime issues. The final chapter of the dissertation provides some concluding thoughts on the findings, implications for policy, and suggests paths forward for future research on the subject.

Chapter 2: Democracy, Democratization, and Conflict

“The more freedom that individuals have in a state, the less the state engages in foreign violence”

– R.J. Rummel (1983, p.27)

2.1 Introduction

Questions relating regimes and systems of government to foreign policy in general, and conflict, are not novel inventions by modern scholars of international relations. Ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle discussed the potential consequences of different regimes on the probability of war between states. More recently, scholars have primarily turned their attention to this topic within the research program that is known as the “Democratic Peace.” This research program follows in the footsteps of a long tradition of liberal theorists and propagandists who have argued that liberal states, founded on principles of equality before the law and elected representation, will conduct themselves peacefully in international affairs (Doyle 1986).

The research program can trace its intellectual heritage to Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, and his *Perpetual Peace*. Kant anticipated the creation of a liberal pacific union in which liberal states would not wage war against each other (Kant, 1970). In the past few decades this research program has directly and indirectly spawned a plethora of studies that have examined the relationship between democracy and international conflict. In general, these studies appear to have largely converged on the conclusion that democracies, at least in their interactions with each other, have come close to eliminating the risk of war (e.g., Dixon 1994, Lipson 2003, Maoz 1996, Mesquita et al. 2003, Mousseau 2000, Oneal and Russett 2015, Owen 2000, Ray 1995, Rousseau et al. 1996, Rummel 1997, Russett 1993, Russett and Oneal 2001, Valentino et al. 2010, Weede 1984).

Scholars within the research program on the democratic peace have primarily concerned themselves with the foreign policies of established, institutionalized democracies. This class of states is, however, not the focus of this project. Starting with the publication of *Democratization and the Danger of War* in 1995, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have forcefully argued that democratizing states represent a partial exception to the Democratic Peace (Mansfield and Snyder 1995). They suggest that publics and leaders in democratizing states are more reckless and willing to use force compared to their counterparts in established, mature democracies. Unlike established democracies, incomplete democratizers lack coherent political institutions that are required if states want to adequately manage domestic political competition and to prevent leaders from engaging in behaviors that will exacerbate the risk of international conflict. Specifically, some political actors in democratizing states will be tempted to turn to nationalism to mobilize support in their pursuit of power. Because of heightened nationalistic sentiments there is an increased risk of international conflict. In making their case, Mansfield and Snyder explicitly draw a distinction between full democratic transitions and incomplete democratic transitions, suggesting that these two categories are distinct from each other and that their argument only is applicable to the latter.

Although this theoretical story is initially compelling, I propose that Mansfield and Snyder have only provided a partially correct description of the real world. Processes of democratization can increase the risk of conflict, but they only do so in certain contexts. Specifically, I suggest that democratization exacerbates the risk of conflict in contexts where there are salient external threats toward the nation or state. These are situations in which domestic political actors effectively can turn to nationalism to mobilize support. Here, the salience of nationalism increases the risk of international conflict and decreases the likelihood that leaders will be able to find peaceful solutions to contentious disagreements with other states. I return to this argument in more detail in

the next chapter. In this chapter, the task is to consider existing arguments and debates relating democracy and democratization to conflict. The discussion that I present in this chapter makes it clear that existing arguments advanced in the democratic peace tradition are not generally applicable to democratic transitions. Although scholars within the democratic peace research program have developed theoretical arguments relating democracy to international conflict, it does not follow that the same arguments can be used to explain the behavior of democratizing states. In addition, I also discuss a few of the major theoretical concepts, found in the literature, that will be used throughout the dissertation, such how we distinguish different regime types from each other and what it means when states transition between these different types.

2.2 The Democratic Peace

By the end of the twentieth century, scholars had produced a plethora of work on the relationship between democratic governance and international peace. Academics, leaders, and policymakers had arrived on a near consensus on the virtues of democracy. From academics such as Jack Levy⁵, to Presidents Clinton and Bush, the belief that one of the main benefits of liberal democracy is the peace had firmly taken root among democratic states. Waves of democratization across the globe in the post-Second World War era and transitions toward democracy in the Soviet Union, Nicaragua, South Korea, Chile, and elsewhere presented hope that the world would soon be permeated by peaceful and co-existing democratic states. The Clinton administration emphasized democratization in its foreign policy, especially in Eastern Europe. The Bush administration similarly pursued an even more aggressive, and potentially ill-advised, policy of

⁵ In what has become one of the most quoted claims in the discipline, Jack Levy concluded that the peace among democracies is the closest thing we have to an “empirical law” in the study of international relations (Levy 1988, p. 662).

democracy promotion abroad, especially in the Middle East. Where does this belief in the peaceful nature of democratic governance come from?

Scholars in international relations have put forward two main explanations in their endeavor to understand the pacific nature of democratic regimes; the normative and the institutional logics.⁶ These two logics were traditionally put forward as competing explanations, but later came to be viewed as complementary (Russett and Oneal, 2001). The normative perspective suggests that the pacifist nature of democratic regimes is rooted in underlying democratic norms found in democratic societies. These norms include examples such as rule by consent of the governed, free speech, due process of law, and the settlement of political disputes through non-violent processes. Domestic actors are aware that political decisions with which they disagree can be overturned peacefully in the future without having to resort to violence, rendering the use of force in the pursuit of political outcomes unnecessary. Political elites are socialized to act accordingly both in domestic and international settings. When democratic leaders interact with each other shared democratic norms and beliefs help them build trust and respect that can help them manage potential conflicts through peaceful means (Dixon 1994, Weart 1998). Norm externalization and mutual trust and respect are the core components of the normative explanation as to why democracies do not fight full-scale wars with each other (Rosato 2003). It also provides an answer to the question of why democracies are prepared to fight wars with nondemocracies. In interactions between democratic and nondemocratic leaders, democratic leaders have no reason to assume that their nondemocratic counterparts share their liberal democratic norms of peaceful conflict resolution. Democratic leaders therefore distrust nondemocratic leaders and might even

⁶ Others use a slightly different terminology when referencing these two perspectives. As an example, Russett and Oneal (2001) label these as the cultural and structural explanation, respectively.

consider them to be illegitimate. As a result, wars between democracies and nondemocracies should not be surprising even if the normative logic holds for interactions between democracies.

It is not as straightforward to apply the normative explanation of liberal democratic peace to democratizing states. Rosato (2003) notes that a democracy might not be recognized as such in the early stages of a process of democratization because these states do not exhibit the characteristics that are associated with established, mature democracies. Whatever trust and respect that might exist between leaders of fully democratic countries are not likely to materialize in interactions with leaders of emerging democratic states. Democratizing states are not considered to have completed their journey and cannot credibly, despite their best attempts, claim to be members of the club. Democratic leaders are not necessarily unfair in this assessment of emerging democratizers. The process of internalizing liberal norms is a process that takes time for both political leaders and the public in general. Mansfield and Snyder (2005, p. 29) point out that elections in many countries may simply be “window-dressing” to cover up the reality of authoritarianism. For example, although elections may take place in emerging democratic societies, they may often not be fully free and competitive. The balance of power between the legislature and the executive branch, as in Wilhelmine Germany, may also be tilted heavily in favor of the latter and not give observers confidence in that the regime is committed to democratic norms over the long-term. The normative logic attempting to explain peace among democratic states does not appear to be applicable to young democracies and states that are in a democratic transition.

The second main explanation for the democratic peace shifts the focus from norms to domestic institutions. The institutional argument comes in two different, although related, versions that highlight distinct impacts of institutional arrangements in democratic regimes. In democracies,

leaders are subject to electoral contests that can punish or reward them for their performance. Aware of the fact that voters are likely to punish them at the ballot box for policies of which they disapprove, leaders will attempt to avoid rushing into costly foreign policy adventures. Fighting external wars is often a costly proposition for which the population of a country will end up paying the price for. Although some scholars maintain that there is a rally-around-the-flag effect (e.g., Chapman and Reiter 2004; Lian and O'Neal 1993; Mueller 1970) that leaders can use to their benefit, wars are often protracted and incur heavy sacrifices on behalf of populations. Democratic leaders are unlikely to view this as a wise gamble compared to the plethora of other policies that they have at their disposal (Reiter and Stam 2002).

In addition to the possible electoral consequences, democratic leaders are also subject to domestic checks and balances. The decision to enter an armed conflict with other states often requires more than a simple, unilateral decision by the chief executive. Legislatures and other domestic institutions have an influence over several factors that directly impact the ability of a chief executive to enter international conflicts. Legislatures hold the power of the purse and determine whether, and how much, resources are appropriated for the military. Legislatures are often also required to be consulted on whether formal declarations of war can be issued against foreign entities. In short, democracies place significant limitations on the ability of chief executives to unilaterally enter international conflicts without broad approval from other domestic actors.

Others have argued that democracies will be more transparent and unable to hide their true intentions (Kydd, 1997). Secret deals and backroom games are therefore harder to maintain, or enter, for democratic leader due to their fear of electoral punishment if their dealings with foreign entities become public knowledge (Fearon 1994). Democratic states may still be the targets of hostile acts by foreign governments and can still become involved in international conflict. Russett

and O'Neal (2001) find that democracies are about as likely to fight wars as nondemocracies and are therefore not more peaceful in general. However, democracies are more likely to win wars when they do fight (Reiter and Stam 2002). The combination of two democratic states, with checks and balances in both systems, might help produce an institutional peace between democratic countries.

This argument, advanced in the democratic peace tradition, also faces some problems when it is applied to states undergoing processes of democratization. Democratizing states are not characterized by well-established, democratic institutions that are able to manage expectations and provide clear punishment mechanisms for leaders when they make poor and costly decisions. In democratizing states, old authoritarian institutions have either been modified or completely replaced with new political systems that have started to allow for political competition. Some of these institutions may have *prima facie* democratic characteristics, but that is no guarantee that these regimes in fact operate according to liberal democratic principles. Checks and balances may be in place but are not necessarily effective at preventing overly ambitious political actors from taking decisions that will set the country on a path to war. Even in cases where bureaucrats sincerely want to protect and build upon nascent democratic institution, it is unlikely that they possess the necessary experience that is needed to manage fierce political competition among domestic political actors. As a result, new democratic institutions are likely to struggle in preserving the new democratic order that has been put in place after the breakdown of more authoritarian regimes.

States that find themselves in democratic transitions have unique characteristics that separate them from established, fully institutionalized democracies. This creates a distinct class of cases for which traditional explanations found within the democratic peace tradition do not apply.

Norms that are found in established liberal democracies require time and effort to become ingrained in the political and social culture of a country. Institutions that have been recently erected are unlikely to have the capacity to properly manage fiercely competitive domestic political environments. This discussion also highlights the distinction between democratizing states and stable, authoritarian regimes. Democratizers are characterized by nascent and democratic norms that were not present under the previous regime. Similarly, democratizers have also started to incorporate institutional characteristics usually associated with liberal democracies, such as elections and freedom of speech. This suggests that states in democratic transitions are distinct from not just democracies but also authoritarian regimes.

Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have attempted to shed light on whether there is a relationship between incomplete democratization and conflict in several scholarly publications. Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2009, 2012) have examined various aspects of the relationship between democratization and conflict in a series of scholarly works. Perhaps the most provocative and striking finding is that states that find themselves in ongoing, or what might also be described as stalled, democratic transitions are eight to ten times more likely to become involved in conflict compared to stable states (Mansfield and Snyder 2005). Recent cross-border violence in Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories is also attributed to democratization and elections (Mansfield and Snyder 2012). Their argument suggests that incomplete democratic transitions exacerbate the risk of both internal and international conflict in countries possessing weak domestic institutions that are unable to sustain democratic politics during the transition. The breakdown of authoritarian regimes, emergence of weak political institutions, and fierce political competition in a context of mass political participation push political elites toward nationalistic strategies. Consequently, there is a heightened risk of conflict.

Although their argument is often presented as a direct critique of the democratic peace, Mansfield and Snyder's work on democratization and conflict is better interpreted as a study of a class of cases that are distinct from the institutionalized and mature democracies that have been the primary concern of scholars in the democratic peace tradition. In their own words:

“War has never happened between mature democracies, yet countries undertaking a transition toward democracy are quite war-prone toward regimes of all types. If the attitudes of publics in mature democracies serve as a prudent constraint on elites’ tendencies to wage war, why are the publics in democratizing states apparently more reckless?”

(Mansfield and Snyder, 2005, p. 21)

Accepting the substantial body of work in the democratic peace tradition, Mansfield and Snyder do not suggest that mature, established liberal democratic states are not able to maintain pacific relations with each other. Nonetheless, Mansfield and Snyder's argument has been viewed as a criticism of the democratic peace even though their object of study is distinct from pairs of mature, institutionalized democratic states. In a similar vein to Mansfield and Snyder's work on democratizing states, this project is not concerned with evaluating the merits of arguments made in the democratic peace tradition. There is ample evidence that a class of states has managed to nearly eliminate conflict from their interactions with each other, although the reasons for as to why that is the case remains disputed.⁷ Neither is this project an attempt to evaluate the two theoretical explanations, normative or structural, for the democratic peace.⁸ Rather, the goal of this project is to enhance our understanding of a set of cases for which traditional explanations associated with

⁷ See, for example, *The Territorial Peace* by Douglas Gibling (2012) in which he argues that the peace among democracies is preceded by the absence of external, territorial threats. Gibling and Owsiak (2017) argue that democracies are no better at settling territorial disputes than nondemocratic regimes, further strengthening this argument. Other scholars have suggested that the observed peace among democracies can be attributed to economic factors. Hegre (2000) and Mousseau (2000) suggested that the domain of the democratic peace is restricted to states with advanced industrialized economies. In *The Capitalist Peace*, Erik Gartzke (2007) further argued that the root cause of pacific relations among this class of states is found in their shared liberal political economies.

⁸ On this question, I recommend Russett and Oneal's (2001) discussion on how these two logics are complementary and reinforce each other.

the democratic peace tradition do not provide us with clear guidance. The theoretical argument and associated analyses contained on these pages examine the effect of ongoing democratic transitions on states' ability to maintain peaceful relations. The argument, analyses, and claims that I make throughout this project are intentionally limited in scope to a narrow set of cases and should not be interpreted to be a sweeping generalization about all forms of democratic governance. In fact, the argument and analyses that I present in later chapters are restricted to situations in which states have discernable disagreements with each other over certain types of issues. In what follows, I present a typology of regimes and a conceptualization of regime transition. This discussion lays the foundation that underlies the theoretical discussion in the next chapter and the empirical evaluation in later chapters that attempt to answer questions about the foreign policy behavior of democratizing states and their impact on international peace and stability.

2.3 A Typology of Regime Types and Transitions

A project concerned with democratic transitions requires a conceptualization of democratization. Democratization is a process of regime transition in a specific direction. To have a discussion of regime transitions requires us to first distinguish between different types of regimes. We need to identify the changes in characteristics that are relevant to identify and classify democratic transitions. The typology used here follows existing literature on the topic and utilizes two main criteria to distinguish between different regimes. The first consideration is the extent to which governments require popular support to remain in power. The second dimension focuses on institutional restraints, such as constitutional checks and balances, which limit the power of the chief executive in policy and decision-making. This discussion produces three distinct regime

types: authoritarianism, anocracy⁹, and democracy. These roughly correspond to regimes in which the general population has little or no input in the political process and the chief executive is largely unchecked by other government institutions, regimes where some of the population can vote and punish leaders and the chief executive is moderately limited in its ability to unilaterally implement policy, and those regimes in which the population at large can provide input into the political process through free and fair elections and where the chief executive is effectively restrained by other government institutions.

In authoritarian regimes, the selectorate¹⁰ is limited to a small group of elites that decides whether to lend its support to the current regime. Due to the absence of popular elections, leaders are not required to seek approval from the public for government policies or actions. To survive in office, leaders only need to secure support from a small segment of the population. Effective strategies to this end include patronage and the distribution of private benefits to actors that the government believes are necessary for its survival. The regime is not likely to extend the same type of privileges to the population at large since there are few avenues for citizens to remove leaders short of a full-scale rebellion or civil war. Some authoritarian leaders may still attempt to provide some degree of public goods to reduce the risk of rebellion and civil unrest. The limited extent of political competition that takes place in authoritarian regimes is likely to be restricted to whatever divisions that exist within the government and important elites. Actors that find themselves outside the corridors of power, which includes most of the citizens of the country, are not involved in the decision-making process and do not generally participate in the political

⁹ Anocracy is a term frequently used by scholars associated with the Polity Project (Gurr 1974) to denote regimes that fall somewhere between authoritarianism and democracy. Other scholars used 'hybrid regime,' 'illiberal democracy,' and a plethora of other terms to refer to cases located between the two ideal poles (See Levitsky and Way 2002).

¹⁰ The constituency whose support the regime needs to remain in power is sometimes referred to as the selectorate (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999).

process. Authoritarian leaders are also not likely to encounter too much resistance from domestic government institutions. In authoritarian systems, leaders can enact a wide range of policies with ease and are not inhibited by checks and balances. Authoritarian regimes then, are those in which there is little, if any, input from the population-at-large into the politics of the country and the leaders of the country can make policy without being restricted by other government institutions.

In democratic societies, on the opposite end of our regime typology spectrum, there is broad political participation and governments are accountable to the people in regularly held and free elections. Here, political leaders must justify their policies to their respective populations and cannot just rely on small elite groups to remain in power. If they disregard the opinion of the population-at-large, governments anticipate that they may face punishment at the ballot box. Democracy, as a concept, has received plenty of attention from scholars with a plethora of different perspectives on the criteria that ought to define this regime type. We can broadly identify two main perspectives. The first group of scholars define regime type as a choice between mutually exclusive criteria (e.g., Sartori 1978; Cheibub et al. 1996) in which states either are democratic or not. The second approach suggests that democracy is a matter of degree (Bollen 1990). States can be more democratic or less democratic and all states can be placed on a continuous scale. Although we should be aware of this debate, the primary concern of this study is the extent to which political actors need popular support and the freedom that they, once in government, possess to make decisions without institutional restraints. In democracies, free and fair elections allow voters to select and punish their leaders. Leaders are also restrained after they have assumed office by different separation of power schemes. Chief executives in democratic states are rarely able to make decision at will without seeking support or approval from other institutions within the country.

Between autocracies and democracies there is a group of states that share similarities with each. These states may have elections and allow citizens to participate in politics. Although elections take place and citizens can participate in the political process, there are often restrictions on political participation. Governments can still provide favors and patronage to certain individuals or groups to ensure their support at the ballot box.¹¹ Governments in these states are also able to engage in repressive strategies to punish different groups and citizens if they so desire. Despite these flaws, these societies are distinct from the authoritarian regimes discussed above. Anocracies do allow for political participation, although it might be limited and flawed, and include the population in the political process. Governments cannot just rely on a small, elite segment of the population for its political survival and need to make a broader appeal to remain in power.¹²

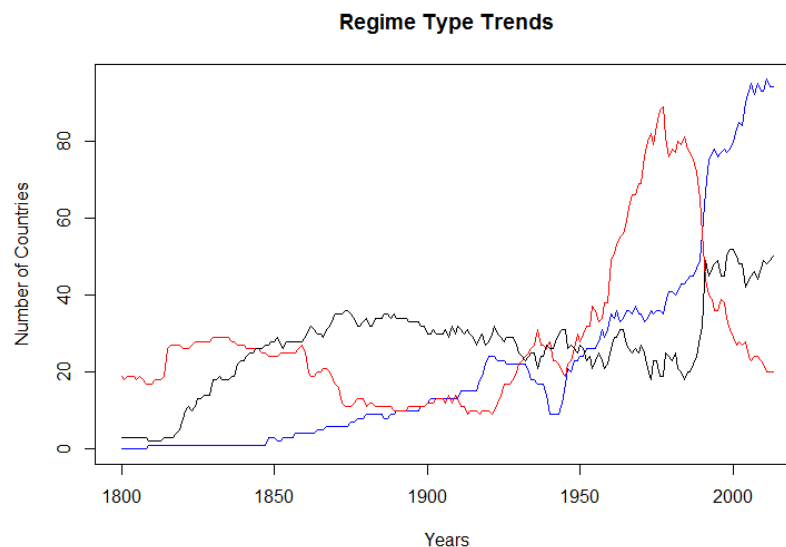


Figure 1: Regime type trends over time

¹¹ See literature on political machines and patronage (e.g., Baldwin 2013, Nichter 2008, Stokes 2005).

¹² The perspective on different regime types that Mansfield and Snyder use in their analyses, and that has been discussed in this section, is strongly influenced by custom within the subfield of international relations.

Figure 1, located above, shows the distribution of states that fall within these three categories. Data for the graph come from the Polity Project and spans the years 1800 through 2015.¹³ The graph leaves a few lasting impressions. First, the number of states within each category is not fixed over time. Second, the number of democracies has seen a steady increase over time, with a few temporary interruptions. The bulk of the increase in the number of democracies has taken place after the Second World War. Third, the number of autocracies in the world has fluctuated over time, seeing both an increase and a following recession in the second half of the 1900s. Fourth, the number of anocratic states has remained stable, with minor fluctuations, for most of the period displayed in figure 1. In the second half of the 1900s, however, the number of anocracies saw a sharp increase. The number of anocracies in the international system today is at or near its peak. The increase in anocracies during this period is a direct result of a reduction in the number of authoritarian states that populate the international system.

The first observation is the most important for our purposes here. Figure 1 shows that the number of states that fall within each category has fluctuated and seen significant change in the past two centuries. States are not fixed within any of these categories and frequently transition from one regime type to another. Democratic transitions, or movement towards democracy, has been a common occurrence since the Second World War. The increased number of democracies and anocracies in the international system is reflected in the decreased number of authoritarian regimes. The breakdown of authoritarian regimes can result in three possible outcomes. In some cases, the breakdown of an authoritarian regime simply leads to a different authoritarian government or leader taking its place. In terms of institutional change, the substitution of one authoritarian regime with another only lead to minimal changes that are not of much consequence

¹³ For details on how this measure is constructed, see the research design in Chapter 4 as well as Gurr (1974).

to the foreign policy behavior of the state. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes that breakdown can also be replaced by new, more democratic political regimes. Here, there are two possible outcomes. One possible path for a state after an authoritarian breakdown is a fast and seamless transition to a fully institutionalized democracy with all that it entails: broad participation, checks and balances, and other characteristics frequently associated with democratic governance. Throughout this project, I will be referring to these transitions as instances of *complete democratization*.

The other possibility is that formerly authoritarian states that break down do not make it all the way to becoming a fully institutionalized democracy. These instances of stalled, or ongoing, transitions are here referred to as cases of *incomplete democratization*.¹⁴ This group includes states that have experienced a breakdown of authoritarianism and movement toward democracy. Here, we find states that have introduced some political reforms – such as the introduction of elections or guarantees of various civil liberties for citizens. The chief executive no longer has full control over the policies of the state and other institutions within government have some influence over government policy. These states have not, however, implemented reforms at the level that would be necessary to join the club of liberal democratic states. Elections are not fully free and participation can be limited to certain groups.

A third type of transition takes place when states move from a state of anocracy to fully institutionalized democracy. These transitions are distinct from those that take place when authoritarian regimes break down. The political systems of anocracies have some aspects of democracy already in place. Citizens are already accustomed to participating in politics to some limited extent and (weak) restraints have been in place on the chief executive. The movement from

¹⁴ Definition and operationalization of incomplete democratization are discussed in chapter 4.

anocracy to democracy does therefore not represent as drastic of a transformation of the political system and its actors as the movement from autocracy to democracy. In this project, I consider states that move from anocracy to democracy to represent a second type of *complete democratization*. The different types of transitions that are discussed here are illustrated in figure 2, located below. The focus of this study is on incomplete democratic transitions. How does the breakdown of authoritarian regimes and the emergence of a more open political system, that still does not qualify as a fully institutionalized democracy, impact the foreign policy behavior of a state?

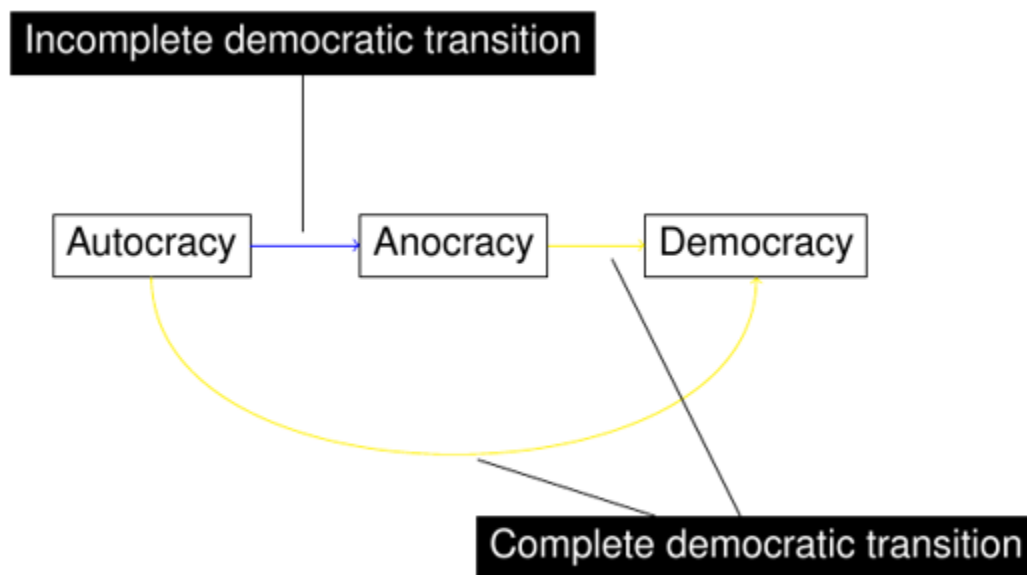


Figure 2: Transitions between regime types

2.4 Regimes, Transitions, and War

Mansfield and Snyder (e.g., 2005) suggest that different types of transitions will have distinct impacts on the prospects of international peace. The centerpiece of their argument highlights the way in which processes of democratization promotes the use of nationalistic strategies. Domestic political actors see their opportunity to launch bids for power and will find nationalism to be an attractive option for mobilizing support to strengthen their case. In this

section, I walk through factors that influence the war proneness of different regimes. This discussion also highlights the role that nationalism plays within different regimes and why leaders of different regimes find nationalism to be an attractive strategy for gaining and/or maintaining power. Critically, Mansfield and Snyder argue that nationalism plays a unique role in democratic regime transitions in which political systems introduce competition and domestic institutions experience democratic reforms. Others have argued that this logic is flawed and neither theoretically or empirically supported. This chapter walks through this enduring disagreement and apparent inability to reach scholarly consensus, suggesting that there is room for additional theoretical and empirical scholarship that will help move the debate forward. In this project, specifically in chapter 3, I introduce a more nuanced argument that aims to do exactly that by drawing upon the literature on territory in international relations.

2.5 Autocracies at War

Existing research suggests that, on average, autocratic states are about as likely to fight wars as democracies (Russett and Oneal 2001). What are the factors that influence whether authoritarian leaders decide to take their country to war or not? Consistent with the previous discussion on the differences between different regimes, two important factors stand out: the level of political support that is necessary for the government to remain in power and the presence, or lack of, institutional restraints imposed on the chief executive. First, autocrats do not have to rely on broad popular support for their political survival. Authoritarian governments are not required to face the electorate at the ballot box in regularly scheduled elections. In cases where elections are held, it is unlikely that they will be characterized as free and fair elections where opponents and alternatives to the government are competing at a level playing field. Electoral victories such as that of Saddam Hussein in the 1995 Iraqi election, where he captured over 99 percent of the

vote, became regular jokes in popular culture in the West. Autocratic leaders, aware that they are unlikely to face punishment at the ballot box, pass on the costs of war to the population-at-large without strong concerns about losing their hold on power. At the same time, authoritarian governments can also shelter supportive groups that they consider vital for the regime's survival. Potential benefits from a conflict, such as the gain of land or natural resources, can also be allocated to domestic groups which the government favors, strengthening the government's level of support among critical groups. Similarly, there are few institutional restraints that prevent the chief executive from waging a war. If a war is likely to be profitable for narrow elite groups that support the chief executive, going to war becomes an attractive option for authoritarian leaders.

This kind of logic suggests that autocrats are more willing to fight wars. However, Mansfield and Snyder (2005, Chapter 3) argue that autocrats have other concerns that also need to be accounted for. Engaging foreign enemies in international conflict requires a mobilization of the state and its citizens that will allow for an effective war effort. This type of mobilization is bound to the promotion of nationalism. While the promotion of nationalism and fanning of nationalistic flames is likely to help authoritarian governments succeed in their war efforts, it also awakens political and nationalistic passions that authoritarian governments may struggle to contain in the long-term. When nationalistic sentiments are high, citizens expect the foreign policy behavior of their government to have a certain characteristic. Specifically, governments will be locked in to taking more belligerent foreign policy positions, unable to reach compromises and settlements that might otherwise have been on the table. Ignoring the passions of the people that the government itself has produced will produce domestic challengers that are likely to attempt to capitalize on the situation. In short, although there are compelling reasons to expect that autocratic leaders are significantly more likely to engage in international conflict than others, autocratic leaders still face

concerns and trade-offs that they need to account for before undertaking ambitious foreign policy adventures. These counter-pressures make authoritarian states neither less or more likely to fight war, on average, than their democratic counterparts.

2.6 Democracies at War

Democracies have a complicated relationship with conflict. Democratic states are not entirely pacifist and do fight wars. One democracy has never, provided certain caveats regarding what constitutes a democracy, fought a full-scale war against another democracy. There are other general patterns in the behavior of democratic states. In general, democracies appear to be more selective than their authoritarian counterparts regarding the wars that they do fight. Reiter and Stam (1998, 2002; see also Reiter 2009) argue that democratic institutions provide incentives for elected leaders to only launch “short, winnable, low-cost wars.” (Reiter and Stam, 2009, p. 194). Others have extended this argument to suggest that democracies are likely to win the crises that they initiate (Gelpi 2001) and that wars and crises are shorter in cases where democracies initiate conflict (Bennett and Stam 1998). A number of factors lead democracies to exhibit distinct foreign policy behavior compared to their authoritarian and anocratic counterparts.

First, democratic leaders are heavily constrained by the fact that they face voters in regularly scheduled and free elections. Unlike leaders in non-democratic states, democratic leaders need to ensure the support of a broader segment of the population. Wars, especially long and destructive wars, incur heavy costs on the population of a state. This cost is paid by the entire population, whose support domestic political actors require to ensure their own political survival. Democratic leaders are therefore constrained by threat of electoral punishment and want to avoid fighting costly wars that erode their domestic support.¹⁵ The institutional context for democratic

¹⁵ Some scholars have argued that when democratic leaders do get involved in longer and more costly wars, they quickly start to seek a way out of the conflict (Goemans 2012, Reiter et al. 2009). However, although this might be

leaders is also distinct from their non-democratic counterparts. Chief executives in democratic regimes are restrained by the diffusion of power that exists among different institutions. Whereas authoritarian leaders often have full power and control over the military and foreign policy of a state, democratically elected leaders require broader institutional support to declare and wage war. Institutional arrangements in democracies afford political actors with continuity and certainty. Przeworski (2000) showed that democracies rarely change their constitutional structures while autocracies, even though they may endure for a long time, exhibit unstable institutional arrangements. The normative explanation for the democratic peace, which was juxtaposed with the institutional explanation earlier in the chapter, would also suggest that political actors in democracies are socialized to prefer peaceful conflict resolutions and will attempt to avoid unnecessary violence.

Turning to the topic of ideas, democracies are normally not at risk of having their foreign policies determined by belligerent nationalistic ideas. That is not to say that political actors in democracies do not ever attempt to use nationalism as a political strategy. Nationalistic strategies are, however, tempered because of several different reasons. Domestic actors in democracies may attempt to promote various types of nationalisms (Mansfield and Snyder, Chapter 3). The participatory politics that exist in democratic states allow for the development of civic nationalism, or patriotism, broadly defined as support for and loyalty to political institutions. Civic nationalism, is often pursued by political actors and promoted by governments and educational systems. In the end, civic nationalism permeates the national culture of most democracies. As democracies grow older and endure, civic nationalism and loyalty to domestic institutions and norms grow stronger

the general trend, there are a number of conflicts where democracies have stayed in costly conflicts (for example, U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Vietnam).

among the citizens of the state.¹⁶ As a result, belligerent forms of nationalism are tempered due to competition from other, more peaceful alternatives in the marketplace of ideas. In situations where belligerent nationalists might be in a position to influence the foreign policy of a democratic state, they will have to contend with the fact that power is diffused across different institutions and that there is a plethora of different actors that will be able to check their desires. Chief executives that might fall within the nationalistic category are checked by legislatures and judiciaries, not able to unilaterally take a democratic state into war. The danger of nationalism in democracies, although it may be presented, is tempered by the characteristics normally associated with liberal democracy.

2.7 Incomplete Democratization and War

Mansfield and Snyder suggest that the story is crucially different for states that have started, but not finished, their transition towards democracy. Publics in these states are granted the ability to participate in the political process and become vital for any domestic actors that wishes to hold political power. These publics are not, however, accustomed to participating in the political process and have not yet developed democratic, civic traditions and norms. In this domestic context threatened old elites and aspiring elites alike will have to try to sway public support if they are interested in political power. Strategies that might have been successful in the past, such as making an appeal to divine right or inherited succession, are not as appealing in a context where social power has become more diffuse. Mansfield and Snyder argue that the nationalist card becomes an attractive option for those vying for power. Where the breakdown of authoritarian regimes has replaced old institutions with new, weaker state institutions, elites will be guided by their parochial electoral interests (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005, p. 55). Political actors cannot be certain that democratic institutions will prevail into the future and will go to great lengths to assure

¹⁶ Democracies appear to endure once they reach a certain level of democracy.

that they are the ones with a firm grip on power. An illustration is found in Wilhelmine Germany where elections had been introduced in an “undemocratic state” (Fairbairn, 1997). Different groups attempted to win over voting blocs based on various nationalistic arguments, the elected Reichstag was severely handicapped in their control over government, and elections were timed to take advantage of national security crises (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005, p. 56). In emerging democratic states, political actors have incentives to turn to nationalistic arguments to fuel their support. This, in turn, increases the risk of international conflict since their domestic, nationalistic strategy makes it difficult to stand down in international crises and find peaceful solutions to international disagreements. Even governments that have not been elected on a nationalistic platform may fear a nationalistic challenge from the opposition if they do not vigorously stand up for the nation in dealings with other states. Leaders who can be described as friendly toward liberal democracy, such as Presidents Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia and Levon Ter-Petrossian of Armenia, were unable to prevent their democratizing countries from engaging in international ethnic strife due to internal pressures.

2.8 The Critics

After they first published their study on democratization and war in the 1990s several scholars have challenged the argument put forward by Mansfield and Snyder. Some of these criticisms have been methodological, focusing on the statistical evidence that was used to buttress their argument. Thompson and Tucker (1997), as well as Ward and Gleditsch (1998), argued that the findings by Mansfield and Snyder did not hold up to further scrutiny and suggested that processes of democratization, as might be suggested by the democratic peace tradition, reduces the risk of conflict. Similarly, Braumoeller (2004) highlighted problems associated with the interpretation of coefficients in statistical models with multiplicative terms. The inclusion of an

interaction term in a model render lower-order coefficients “essentially useless” for hypothesis testing. To their credit, Mansfield and Snyder (1997, 2002, 2005) have done much to try and answer their critics by addressing potential flaws in their research design and data. Thus, they maintain that their argument is still supported by their models after having addressed the methodological concerns mentioned here.

Other scholars have raised theoretical objections to the idea that democratization heightens the risk of war. In a broader study analyzing the impact of contiguity on the foreign policy behavior of states, Russett and Oneal (1997) argued that the incidence of conflict depends upon the kind of neighborhood in which democracies emerge. If a neighborhood is more democratic, newly emerging democracies will get along with their neighbors while that is not necessarily the case if their neighbors are authoritarian states. When Russett and Oneal take the neighborhood, or context, into account they do not find evidence that democratic or autocratic transitions heighten the risk of war. I argue that the impact of incomplete democratization on international politics is context-dependent. Incomplete democratization is more likely to produce nationalistic pressures, or make nationalism a viable strategy, for domestic political actors in certain situations. In the next chapter, I show theoretically how this is the case when states face threats from external enemies.¹⁷ External threats either allow for political actors to make effective nationalistic arguments or, alternatively, force domestic actors to take certain actions to prevent others from launching a nationalistic challenge. Specifically, this is the case when states have territorial disagreements with others. In other words, the relationship between states determine whether incomplete democratization is likely to heighten to lead to conflictual foreign policy patterns. The presence of these contentious

¹⁷ Specifically, I am here referring to territorial threats due to the qualitative difference between territorial threats and other types of threats, such as economic embargoes. I discuss this more in-depth in the next chapter.

relationships with other states provides the conditions that produce the dynamics described by Mansfield and Snyder.

After examining the historical record, Narang and Nelson (2009) argued that the advanced by Mansfield and Snyder were almost entirely dependent on the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I. When the Ottoman cases are removed, as Narang and Nelson argue is appropriate, Mansfield and Snyder's significant results are wiped out. In their response, Mansfield and Snyder (2009) responded to these concerns by arguing that the Ottoman case(s) provide a good illustration of their theory and maintained that there is no good justification for omitting the Ottoman cases from their analysis.

Yet another critique has focused on the choice of measurement and operationalization of incomplete democratization. Scholars have discussed the plethora of choices that are available for researchers that are interested in conceptualizing and measuring different types of regimes (e.g., Boogards 2010; Bernhard et al. 2016). Boogards (2010) highlights the impact of coding decisions related to regime type. How scholars conceive of democracy and the way in which we approach the categorization of regimes matter for empirical analysis. In his attempt to evaluate different measures of democracy, Boogards argue that Mansfield and Snyder's results cannot be replicated using other datasets. Bernhard et al. (2016) also focus on the conceptualization and measurement of democratization and its role in hypothesis testing. They find widely disparate results using different measures of democracy on the effects of democratization on conflict behavior.¹⁸

Despite this sustained and vigorous academic debate around the conflict proneness of democratizing states it has largely been confined to a narrow debate between Mansfield and Snyder and their critics. Mansfield and Snyder have done an admirable job of responding to their critics,

¹⁸ Bernhard et al. (2016) also suggest that autocratic regime change is more robustly correlated with conflict initiation than previously recognized in the literature.

producing a persuasive body of work that is frequently cited in textbooks¹⁹ and lectures on international relations. This scholarly debate has not, however, produced much in the way of a consensus on the effects of incomplete democratization on international politics. Consider the debate over whether Mansfield and Snyder have used the appropriate measurement or dataset in order to construct their variables. Academic debates over the conceptualization of democracy are hardly new and the operationalization of such variables is highly dependent upon theoretical justifications and appropriateness. The debate over democratization up to this point has stalled without reaching anything resembling a consensus on whether incomplete democratization is problematic for international peace and stability. I argue that a more appealing approach that we can use to learn more about how exactly democratization is to consider more nuanced theoretical explanations for the relationship between incomplete democratic transitions and foreign policy. In this project, I therefore take on the question of *when* we should expect incomplete democratization to impact the foreign policy behavior of states. In other words, this project does not have the grand ambition of answering the question of whether democratization, in general, leads to more conflict in the international system. Rather, the goal is to identify certain situations in which democratization is likely to lead to more belligerent foreign policies that can cause conflict or make it more difficult to find peaceful resolutions to existing disputes.

2.9 Moving Forward

Where should one start to look for an answer to the question of when incomplete democratization might exacerbate disagreements and cause conflict? A good starting point is the work of Benjamin Miller. Miller (2012) suggested that the causal mechanism that Mansfield and Snyder (e.g., 2005) put forward is unable to account for much the variation that exists across

¹⁹ See, for example, Goldstein and Pevehouse (2015)

different democratizing states. Recall that an integral part of Mansfield and Snyder's argument is the suggestion that some democratizers have weak institutions while other democratizers have strong institutions. However, it is the case that some democratizers with strong state institutions still appear to have fought wars while others, with weaker institutions, remained peaceful (Miller 2012, p. 456). Building on this observation, Miller (2012) engages in a promising attempt at untangling the relationship between democratization and conflict: democratization can heighten the risk of conflict, but only under certain conditions. Specifically, Miller suggests that the effect of democratization on the probability of conflict is dependent on the interaction between existing institutions²⁰ and nation building²¹. States that have achieved what Miller describes as a 'state-to-nation balance' will experience pacifying effects of democratization, or a warm peace (Miller 2007, pp 12-13). Where there is a state-to-nation imbalance, democratization can bring about instability and violence. This attempt at examining the effects of democratization of conflict takes seriously the idea that the effects of democratization is going to have varying effects depending on the contexts in which it is taking place. Although Mansfield and Snyder (e.g. 2005) also highlight the role of weak institutions, the explanation put forward by Miller (2012) is more fine-grained and attempts to take seriously the idea that democratization can have different effects depending on when and where it is taking place. Along the same lines, I suggest that there are certain contexts and situations in which ongoing democratic transitions will make it more difficult to find peaceful solutions.²² Democratization, by the way of allowing for fierce political competition and an open political system, can increase the risk of conflict in situations where external threats are present.

²⁰ A strong state is one that can govern successfully and can implement policies and fulfill key functions that are expected of the government.

²¹ Miller (2012) defines successful nation building as a strong acceptance and identification of the people in the state with the existing state and its territorial boundaries.

²² Vasquez (2009, p. 367) suggests that Miller's state-to-nation balance really is a story about territory and that the territorial explanation of war carries more weight.

In the next chapter, I discuss how processes of democratization can heighten the risk of conflict in situations where territorial disagreements exist between states and propose several testable hypotheses that are empirically examined in forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 3: Democratization, Nationalism, and Territory

3.1 Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, the number of democracies in the international system has increased by a factor of five. The movement of states from autocracy to democracy represents one of the most remarkable developments in the post-World War era. In the previous chapter, I discussed the fact that we do not have a full understanding of how ongoing or incomplete democratic transitions impact the foreign policy behavior of states. The goal of this project is to remedy this unfortunate state of affair by improving our understanding of the implications of regime transitions on foreign policy behavior. The previous chapter laid out the current state of the literature and lack of scholarly consensus. Here, I provide a theoretical argument linking processes of democratization to the foreign policy behaviors of states. This is achieved by incorporating insights from the growing literature on territory in international politics. In short, I argue that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict in situations where territory, as a form of external threat, is a salient point of contention between states.

At the end of the previous chapter, I suggested that existing arguments relating processes of democratization to conflict are incomplete. Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have forcefully argued, in several scholarly works, that democratic transitions exacerbate the risk of war because nationalism is a potent and effective tool for domestic political actors that can be used to build legitimacy and mobilize support. However, it is also obvious that democratic transitions do not invariably lead to conflict; not every state that goes through a democratic transition fight wars and it does not appear that democratization always heightens the risk of conflict. This suggests that incomplete democratization increases the risk of conflict in certain situations but not in others where it might instead either reduce the risk of conflict or potentially have no effect at all.

Mansfield and Snyder attempt to address this by making a distinction between democratizers with weak and strong domestic institutions. This argument, however, is not compelling. It is certainly the case that different democratizing states exhibit some degree of institutional variation. It is also possible for different states to sequence their transition to democracy in different ways. However, the breakdown of an authoritarian regime and the initiation of a transition to democracy invariably entails the replacement or revision of old institutions. Emergent institutions that are put in place with the intention to support new political regimes lack public faith and support at the same time as they are shrouded in uncertainty. Citizens and political actors do not have assurances that new institutions that have been erected are in it for the long-haul or whether they will soon fade away and be replaced yet again. Bureaucrats operating within these new institutions lack experience and are likely to struggle in managing political competition and implementing policy in a chaotic political environment. These are defining characteristics that all fledgling institutions in democratizing states have in common. Although institutional differences might exist across democratizing states, they are likely to be small and explanations that are advanced based on these institutional differences are not convincing.

The argument that I introduce in this chapter asks scholars to consider a different and more nuanced theoretical story. Democratization is at times going to increase domestic pressures on political leaders to take more belligerent and less accommodating foreign policy positions. This will not, however, always be the case. If nationalism is the mechanism through which democratization leads to belligerent foreign policy, a potent research agenda involves examining situations where this is likely to happen. I suggest that democratization will heighten the risk of international conflict in contexts where states have external threats that make nationalism a more potent political strategy for domestic political actors. In this chapter, I attempt to identify situations

in which this is the case. Specifically, I argue that this is the case in situations where territory is a salient issue. When territory is a salient point of contention between states, domestic political actors can use nationalism as a mobilization strategy in order to support their political ambitions. Where territorial issues are not salient, political actors may still attempt to make nationalistic arguments but will find it much harder to succeed in attracting supporters to their cause. In fact, political actors are less likely to opt for nationalistic arguments because of its impotency as a political strategy. In what follows, I first engage in a discussion of the existing research on territory in international relations. This discussion is then linked to the democratization literature where I discuss how democratization hampers the ability of states to reach peaceful settlements, and increase the risk of conflict, in contexts where territory is a salient issue.

3.2 Territorial Issues

Scholarly interest in territorial issues started with the observation that contiguity appeared to have some relation to interstate conflict. The field of international relations has long held that geographic proximity is linked to conflict and heightened tensions. In the first dyadic analysis of international conflict, Bremer (1992) observed that states bordering each other are much more likely to become involved in conflicts with each other. In his analysis, covering the period from 1816 through 1965, contiguous states were 35 times more likely to fight a war than non-contiguous states. These findings are hardly surprising. After all, it does make somewhat intuitive sense that states bordering each other are more likely to resort to arms than states located oceans away from one another. At the same time, it is also blatantly obvious that not all contiguous states fight war with their neighbors. Contiguity is therefore not that useful of a tool to help us explain and understand variation in international conflict behavior (See Huth, 2009). Contiguous states fight wars with neighbors sometimes, and then only with some, of their neighbors. Subsequent research

attempted to discover patterns or regularities that distinguishes those neighbors that fight wars from those that do not. Vasquez (1993) provided an answer to this question when he argued that the underlying reason for wars among neighbors is to be found in unresolved, territorial issues. Diehl (1992) had previously highlighted the idea that scholars should examine the issues over which states have disagreements or interact with each other to find patterns of conflict. Vasquez (1993) argued that the source of conflict among contiguous states stems from the fact that territorial disagreements, which happen to be more common among neighbors, are uniquely difficult to resolve and therefore more likely to lead to conflict between states. Vasquez's argument spawned a rich and productive research program examining the particularly dangerous nature of territorial disputes in which scholars have confirmed the unique and profound impact of territory in international politics.

Far from being an uncommon source of disagreement, Holsti (1991) found that three-fourths of all wars involved contention over territory as opposed to other issues. Huth (2009) highlights the fact that contention over territory consistently accounts for about one-third of all militarized interstate disputes, regardless of time period. Militarized interstate disputes over territory are significantly more likely to escalate than confrontations over other types of issues (e.g., Hensel 1996; Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Senese and Vasquez 2008). Focusing on rivalries in international politics, evidence also suggests that competition over territory is likely to lead to recurrent conflict between involved states (Diehl and Goertz 1988; Tir and Diehl 2002; Tir 2006). Scholars have also examined the ability of leaders to successfully, and peacefully, manage international territorial claims, finding a more nuanced relationship between territory and conflict. Scholarship provided us with the encouraging finding that territorial claims are not usually resolved through military action. In fact, over half of all territorial claims do not even produce a

single militarized dispute (Huth 2009). This is, however, only true for a subset of territorial claims. Claims that exhibit lower levels of salience are easier for states to manage peacefully whereas more salient territorial claims see much higher frequencies of military action, as well as more frequent attempts at peaceful settlement. Summarizing much of the literature in the past two decades since Vasquez's initial argument about the role of territory, Diehl (2006, 268) remarked that the findings linking territorial issues to international conflict is among the most durable in conflict research. Territory, as a point of contention between states, appears to play a profound role in the conflict behavior of states.

Vasquez (1993) suggests that it is about more than simply the tangible elements²³ (Goertz and Diehl 1992), such as economic value, that is attached to the land in territorial disagreements. Instead, Vasquez argued that humans are biologically wired to treat these types of issues differently. Humans have been socialized to accept violence as an appropriate way of dealing with disputes over territory. We find similar behavior among other animals that fight to control territory (Wilson 1975; Goodall 2000). Johnson and Toft (2013) argue that territorial behavior, or territoriality, has evolved independent among a wide range of different groups regardless of geographic location. Humans, and other animals alike, have developed territoriality to survive in the truest Darwinian sense. Provided that the territoriality argument is true, Vasquez suggested that we should be able to observe several different empirical patterns in the international political system (Vasquez 1993, p. 155). Specifically, we should observe that 1) states divide the world into different territorial units using threat or force; 2) that states are highly sensitive to threats to territory and willing to meet them by force; 3) contiguous states of similar strength would establish boundaries with force at some point in their history; and 4) new states threaten existing territories,

²³ This includes factors such as strategic minerals, oil, freshwater, or fertile agricultural land.

increasing the use or threat of force. As Johnson and Toft (2013) point out, Vasquez himself concluded that at least the first two predictions are firmly supported by observable patterns (Vasquez 1993, p. 155).

Senese and Vasquez (2008) incorporate Vasquez' territorial explanation for war in the broader-steps-to-war framework. The Steps to War approach has suggested that international conflict results from a process in which territory plays an important role as an underlying cause (Vasquez 1993, Senese and Vasquez 2008). According to this approach, territorial issues tend to be viewed through the lens of *realpolitik* and, as such, are handled accordingly through strategies such as military alliances and military buildups. States risk ending up in situations akin to the security dilemma (Jervis 1978) in which they are unable to defuse conflicts and instead pursue escalation in their attempts to gain the upper hand over their foe. Per this logic, the combination of territorial threats, usually in an escalating series, creates a hostile spiral that produces hard-liners on at least one side of the conflict that increase the risk of war (Vasquez 1993, 1996, 2009; Vasquez and Gibler 2001). Wright and Diehl (2016), although they do not dismiss arguments made in the Steps to War research program, suggest that insufficient attention has been paid to the domestic underpinnings and consequences of territorial issues.

A prominent example of research that explicitly theorizes the relationship between international territorial issues and domestic politics is found in the Gibler's work on the Territorial Peace. Gibler (2012) argues that biological and socio-psychological attachments to land is derived from group identities that are connected to certain areas of land. Areas that are intimately connected to specific nations are frequently and colloquially referred to as 'homelands'. Applying this label to certain territories suggests that it carries a unique significance for those who belong to that nation. Threats that are issued against territory that groups consider to be their homeland

result in increased centralization of the state and a heightened risk of conflict with other states in the international system. Other studies have examined the impact of territorial threat on other domestic policies. For example, territorial threats against the state appears to reduce the level of political trust that citizens have in domestic political actors (Hutchison 2011) and lower support for political freedoms (Hutchison and Gibler 2007). Wright and Diehl (2012) argue that territorial disputes are particularly war prone for certain combinations of political regimes. Specifically, they find that territorial conflicts are especially war prone when democratic and autocratic states are engaged in conflict against one another.

This research program informs us about the profound role of territory in international politics. I argue that the primary effect of democratization on foreign policy behavior is found in contexts where states have territorial issues with other states. Specifically, processes of democratization make it more difficult for states to find peaceful solutions to territorial issues and to prevent these issues from escalating into militarized conflict. In democratic transitions, old authoritarian institutions have started to be replaced with new, reformed institutions that are supposed to help structure politics in the new regime. Political participation is suddenly expanded beyond the confines of a narrow, political elite. In this setting, political actors search for ways to legitimize their bid for power and mobilize domestic support to beat out competitors. It is here, I suggest, that it is possible for different groups to harness contention over territory with other states in their attempt to make an appealing, nationalistic argument to the selectorate. Territorial issues are especially conducive to nationalistic strategies due to their role as significant external threats to the state and nation. These nationalistic strategies, in turn, leave politicians unwilling to compromise with foreign actors due to their desire to maintain credibility as representatives of the nation. Making concessions over territorial issues would cause irreparable damage to this

credibility and weaken the domestic position of the government. It is unlikely that democratization will produce similar effects in situations where states have disagreements over other types of issues. I argue that disagreements between states over non-territorial issues, for example over policies such as slave trade, do not create the same fertile ground for nationalistic strategies. Political actors in democratizing states searching for ways to mobilize support behind their bid for power will find it harder to fashion an efficient nationalistic argument that will attract voters and popular support if they attempt to invoke non-territorial issues as the core of their argument. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I expand on this argument and articulate how processes of democratization is related to territory, nationalism, and international conflict.

3.3 Nationalism

At its core, nationalism is a political idea which suggests that nations should maintain full sovereignty over a specific territory, usually of some historic significance to the group. Nationalism has been a core component of politics since the birth of the nation-state and the Westphalian system in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Since then, it has frequently been deployed as a political strategy by actors in search of influence and power. National identities have been used and shaped by political leaders operating in various contexts and times. Benedict Anderson (2006, Chapter Six) describes how ‘Russification’ became official state policy. In their pursuit of the creation of a more manageable state, and to promote national unity, Russian identity was actively encouraged throughout the realm. In France, the government vigorously promoted policies such as common military service, national railways, and standardized education in efforts to shape and promote a national French identity in the late nineteenth century. Here, some have argued that the creation of the French state preceded the formation of a French people (Weber 1976; Hobsbawm 1992). Other states are the products of determined, nationalistic political

campaigns. German nationalism, for instance, was largely a response to the eastward conquests of German territories by France under Napoleon. On the Italian peninsula, nationalist movements strived for, and succeed, in their ambition to unify Italy into a single state.

The degree to which nationalism is a factor in domestic politics exhibits variations across countries. Nationalism is not always a relevant factor that domestic actors attempt to grab on to promote their agenda. Political actors have many other types of arguments that they can marshal to build support behind their cause. Depending on the domestic context, nationalistic appeals can also be limited to the most extreme fringes of the population, leaving it near useless for political actors with significant ambitions. Consider, for instance, the case of domestic politics in Sweden. Nationalism, as it has been defined here, has been largely irrelevant in modern Swedish political history. No Swedish governing party has made an explicitly nationalistic argument in the past 200 years. Rather, Swedish parties have advanced patriotism, civic nationalism, and faith in the Swedish model as causes and symbols worth rallying around. In Sweden's large neighbor to the south, Germany, nationalism has remained taboo for the past seventy years in the wake of two devastating world wars that rained destruction across the continent. Notably, the cases of Sweden and Germany are examples of fully institutionalized democracies. Other, less democratic states, have been more likely to experience prominent examples of nationalism during the same period. In Iraq, then led by Prime Minister Salih Jabr, domestic actors competed through nationalistic outbidding, ultimately resulting in the Palestinian War of 1948-1949 between Israel and four of its Arab neighbors (Eppel 1994; Mansfield and Snyder 2005). Nationalistic strategies are not always viable and attractive options that can support the ambitions of political actors. Often, political entrepreneurs will find that nationalistic arguments only hold strong appeal for a limited segment of the population, far short of what is required to propel them to power. I suggest that certain

factors make nationalistic strategies successful, available, and viable. Specifically, the presence of foreign enemies can make nationalistic strategies an attractive option for domestic political actors. External threats, particularly in the form of territorial issues, lends itself to be used for purposes of nationalistic mobilization. When the homeland is threatened by external forces, domestic political actors can tap into feelings of national pride and fear that otherwise would not be present. Similarly, political actors can use claims to territory held by other states, perhaps lost in recent wars, to achieve similar appeals.

3.4 Nationalism in Different Regimes

The temptation to use external threats, such as territorial disagreements, as fuel for a nationalistic strategy is especially tempting for political actors in democratizing states. Becoming the nationalistic standard-bearer allows political actors in democratizing states to draw on a source of much needed legitimacy. Although nationalism could be an option for political leaders across different regimes, the appeal and usefulness of nationalistic strategies varies between regime types. In authoritarian regimes, nationalism is merely one of many available sources of potential political legitimacy and authority. Autocrats can use a host of different strategies, ranging from oppressive state policies to claims to government based in divine right, in order maintain their credibility. The risks that are associated with nationalistic strategies and a galvanized domestic population make it a risky proposition for any authoritarian leader. Stoking nationalistic fires among voters may take turns that undermine the authority and legitimacy of authoritarian leaders down the road. Autocratic leaders are interested in preserving their ability to make decisions and want to avoid getting boxed in by a population whose political opinions are fueled by belligerent nationalism. Consequently, we should not expect authoritarian leaders to be eager to promote the spread of nationalism among the population unless they have run out of other options. Even in cases where

autocrats do promote nationalism, authoritarian governments have tools at their disposal that they can use to shape the direction that nationalistic sentiments take.

In democracies, political actors are presented with many options for building legitimacy and mobilizing support. In institutionalized and mature democracies, the established democratic system lends legitimacy, credibility, and authority to those who operate within it. Officeholders and politicians can point to the process that gave them power and voters are aware that their leaders have been dutifully elected in free and fair elections where different political candidates could compete. There is minimal uncertainty about whether another election will be held at the end of the current term and where the boundaries of different branches of government lie. Additionally, citizens of democratic states recognize that decisions made by the government and its bureaucrats follow rigorous rules and are not arbitrarily applied. In this context, the legitimacy and authority of a government is rarely in question and is refreshed every so often in regularly held elections. Here, nationalism is not a particularly attractive potential strategy for politicians and political parties. A benefit of nationalism is that it can provide candidates and officeholders with legitimacy that they are otherwise lacking. In mature democratic systems, mainstream political actors already have, or can obtain, legitimacy without turning to nationalism. Nationalism is not the only potential game in town. Domestic political actors have a plethora of different ideological arguments at their disposal, ranging from collectivist ideologies to individualist classical liberal ideas. These other ideologies often appeal to broader segments of the population and carry fewer risks for those who opt to use them as their foundation in their bid for power.

This is not to say that political parties built around nationalism do not exist in democracies. A quick glance at history books or media outlets provide countless examples of political actors that are attempting or have attempted to use nationalistic arguments. Recently, we have seen a rise

of anti-immigration, Eurosceptic, anti-globalist parties across Europe. Do these parties serve as evidence that nationalism is a viable political strategy in democratic regimes? Could they potentially lead to more belligerent foreign policies by the states in which these movements have seen success? The answer to both questions is a cautious no. First, the form of nationalism that has seen electoral success in Europe in recent years is qualitatively different from the belligerent form that has been discussed here.

Earlier, I highlighted the fact that not all forms of nationalism are necessarily going to lead to more belligerent foreign policies. Civic nationalism might, in fact, be a net positive for a state due to increased cohesion and trust in democratic institutions. Softer forms of nationalism, or patriotism, are also likely to be more successful political strategies in democracies than belligerent forms of nationalism. In general, parties that have pursued a more belligerent form of nationalism have seen remarkably little electoral success across Europe in recent years. The British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League (EDL) are examples of parties that have taken more extreme nationalistic positions in British politics. The British people, on the other hand, have punished both groups but marginalizing them instead of rewarding them for their political platforms.²⁴ Instead, political strategies pursuing softer forms of nationalism proved to be more efficient in British politics (Ford and Goodwin, 2014). The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), combined calls for reduced immigration and withdrawal from the European Union with a general libertarian/classical liberal approach to politics.²⁵

²⁴ At the “height” of its electoral success, the British National Party received 1.9 percent of the votes cast at the 2010 General Election. In 2015 and 2017 the party was reduced to vote shares that, when rounded, amount to 0.0 percent.

²⁵ It should be noted that UKIP saw a significant reduction in vote share in the 2017 General Election. The party can be considered “successful” in as much that they played a pivotal role in causing the government of David Cameron to call a referendum on Britain’s EU membership and that the party holds (currently, July 2018) significant representation in the European Parliament.

In other countries, successful parties that have adopted anti-immigration positions have also subscribed to more classical liberal, free market policy positions rather than belligerent nationalism. In Norway, the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) was founded as an anti-tax party and today describes itself as a “classical liberal” and “conservative-liberal” party. Other European nationalist parties have been forced to engage in significant reform to convince voters that they are a viable, legitimate choice. In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) emerged on the national scene in the 1990s with explicitly racial arguments. It was not, however, until the party had undergone significant reform in a moderate direction that they managed to cross the threshold to the parliament in 2010. There are a few exceptions to this discussion. The Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) is a right-wing, national-conservative party that has seen recent success in Austrian politics after adopting more nationalistic and provocative positions. Notably, FPÖ has decided to include territorial issues with other countries in their party platform. Here, FPÖ calls attention to a long-standing territorial issue with Italy and demands the unification of South Tyrol (Italy) with Tyrol (Austria).

Two facts do however remain. First, prominent and successful belligerent nationalistic parties are relatively few and far apart in democratic states.²⁶ Those parties that do achieve success, and that could conceivably be described as nationalistic parties, tend to be those that represent softer, non-belligerent forms of nationalism. More extreme nationalistic parties, such as the Sweden Democrats, went through significant reforms to appeal to broader segments of the population before they could enter parliament. Second, even in situations where parties promoting belligerent forms of nationalism, the institutional structures in democracies temper belligerent tendencies through checks and balances. Decisions to initiate conflicts with other states or to

²⁶ A future research program, at the edge between comparative politics and international relations, should examine the conditions under which these parties come to gain influence and their effect(s) on foreign policy.

allocate funding for defense and the military are required to go through the ordinary processes of the existing political system. In short, nationalistic parties are generally found on the fringes of the political spectrum in most established, mature democracies and are not able to pursue unchecked belligerent foreign policies even in situations where do they end up wielding power.

In democratizing states, political leaders cannot draw legitimacy and authority from the same sources as their authoritarian and democratic counterparts. Leaders cannot rely on existing institutions to lend them credibility due to the relatively young age and inexperience of those institutions. Neither can voters be certain that political leaders are going to play by the newly established rules, or that the system will be able to contain leaders from expanding their powers. What prevents an incoming government in a newly established democracy from expanding its executive powers to permanently seize power? Political actors in democratizing states will struggle with legitimacy and authority at the same time as the future of the political system is shrouded in uncertainty. In this context, nationalism can become an appealing alternative for political actors vying for power.

3.5 The Viability of Nationalism as a Political Strategy

However, nationalistic strategies are not always viable or effective. Rather, there are certain situations in which we should expect nationalism to be more effective and widely used as a political tool. Per the preceding discussion of nationalism and territorial threats, political entrepreneurs are more likely to be able to create nationalistic frames in situations where territory is a salient issue. Consider some of the cases brought up by Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder in “*Electing to Fight*” (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005). In one of their cases, the Falklands War, the military junta seized on nationalistic sentiments regarding the reclamation of the Malvinas from the United Kingdom to bolster domestic support. Similarly, the Thai government in 1940 decided to attempt

to seize previously lost territory from the French Vichy regime in Laos and Cambodia. Mansfield and Snyder locate one of the more illustrative cases of their argument in the German wars of reunification. These conflicts had their root in German identity and the idea that the German state should encompass a specific region in which most of the population considered themselves German. These cases, even though Mansfield and Snyder do not spend any time lingering on this point, all involve some aspect of territorial concerns. Argentinian desires to govern Malvinas, Thai wishes to reclaim lands that have previously been lost, and German reunification are all instances where leaders used territory to make nationalistic arguments for political purposes. These examples suggest that democratization might heighten the risk of conflict in situations where states have territorial disagreements with other states.

Territorial disagreements and disputes with other states are perhaps the clearest examples, short of conflict, of external threat that a state in the international system can experience. States consistently struggle to peacefully manage disagreements over territory. Territorial disagreements can also lead to domestic changes such as increased militarization and heightened levels of repression (Hutchison and Gibler 2007). I argue that processes of democratization further exacerbate the difficulties of managing territorial disagreements. Although leaders might be able to find ways to peacefully manage their disagreements, processes of democratization lead to increased and fierce competition in the context of weak institutions, with a lack of democratic norms. Here, domestic political actors will seize on the external threat posed by the territorial disagreement and attempt make a nationalistic bid for power. Due to existing territorial issues, such strategies are appealing and effective potential tools for domestic actors, making nationalism an important factor on the political scene.

3.6 Hardliners in Democratization

What are the effects of political actors turning to nationalistic arguments? Primarily, the use and prominence of nationalism will give a domestic political advantage to hardliners in elections and policy debates. The balance between hardliners and non-hardliners in foreign policy decision-making has received some attention by international relations scholars. Hardliners are those that, when it comes to foreign policy, tend to recommend solutions based on power politics and related practices. The opponents of hardliners, all non-hardliners, largely fall into two separate groups: accommodationists and isolationists (Vasquez 1993; Chapter 6). Accommodationists are those that find the use of force repugnant and advocates compromise and negotiation to avoid war. Isolationists are those primarily concerned with the state of their country and do not care much for the goings on beyond its borders.²⁷ Regardless of their differences, some combination of accommodationists and isolationists make up the non-hardliners in different countries and oppose hardline foreign policy options. Vasquez (1993, pp. 225-236) suggests that the balance between hardliners and non-hardliners is largely determined by events and major crises. Although Vasquez was primarily referring to interstate events such as military crises such as the Berlin blockade and airlift or the Greek-Turkish crisis in the 1940s, the balance between these two groups is also impacted by the initiation of regime transitions.

When authoritarian regimes break down and democratic reforms are put in place the selectorate is expanded beyond the limited circle that existed during autocracy. This by itself does not mean that hardliners become more numerous. During autocracy, there are divisions within the ruling group between those who are willing to seek more belligerent, aggressive foreign policies and those who are willing to seek compromises and peaceful solutions. The initiation of democratic

²⁷ John Vasquez (1993; Chapter 6) provides an in-depth discussion of the differences between hardliners, accommodationists, isolationists, and internationalists.

reforms, however, forces actors that are interested in wielding political influence to pursue support from a much broader segment of the population. In the absence of salient territorial issues different political groups are likely to make appeals based on various ideological perspectives. For example, the struggle for power can take place between different ideological groups such as socialists, liberals, and conservatives who all outline different visions for what kind of society that they find desirable. When territory is a salient issue, however, it also allows ambitious political actors to readily make a nationalistic argument. When actors turn to nationalist rhetoric, that in turn strengthens the hand of domestic hardliners and makes their policy solutions more palatable for the population-at-large, which tips the balance toward hardline foreign policy approaches and away from accommodationists and isolationists.

When democratization takes place in situations where territorial issues are salient, political actors are more likely to make nationalistic arguments and hardliners become more influential in domestic politics. A consequence is that governments will be unwilling to seek compromises and peaceful solutions in international negotiations. For example, consider the context of a territorial dispute. Here, governments populated by hardliners will stand their ground instead of attempting to find compromise solutions. These effects also extend beyond governments that are dominated by hardline nationalists. Governments of non-hardline dispositions find themselves trapped in a difficult situation. These governments are interested in finding non-violent means of resolving the conflict, but are also acutely aware of the potential consequences of appearing too accommodating with a foreign entity. Ceding land and territory that a population believes to be rightfully theirs is an easy way to get a one-way ticket out of office and a gift to the opposition. Although the act of striking a compromise might mean that a violent, military conflict is avoided, but could also result in the governments' ouster from power by actors that capitalize on nationalistic and hardline

sentiments in the population. Negotiating a settlement under these conditions does not guarantee that the issue has been resolved beyond the short-term. If governments are punished for being too accommodating, and are in turn replaced by governments that are more likely to take hardline foreign policy positions, territorial issues that the previous administration attempted to put to rest will be revived.

Mansfield and Snyder theorized that democratizers not only will become involved in more wars, but also that they would be the initiators of international conflict, much in the same way as posited by diversionary war theory. Diversionary war theory, also popularized under monikers such as rally-around-the-flag, suggests that leaders will distract from domestic problem by picking fights with other states. By picking a fight with an external foe the government provides the people with a foreign enemy that rallies supporters to the governments corner and papers over whatever internal divisions might exist. Jack Levy (1980) suggested that almost every war in the past two centuries had been attributed to the desire of domestic leaders to improve their standing and support.²⁸ Tir (2010) provides qualified for diversionary war theory in certain situations. Specifically, he argues that leaders will pursue diversionary aims through the initiation of territorial conflict – a phenomenon that he labels territorial diversion. Diversionary war theory might only be applicable to territorial conflict due to the unique capacity of these conflicts to elicit feelings of threat and unity compared to conflicts over other types of issues.²⁹ I argue that the effects of democratization, in the context of a territorial dispute, extend beyond conflict initiation. Instead, democratization has a more general galvanizing effect on a country when external,

²⁸ Quantitative empirical evidence for the diversionary war theory has, however, not emerged. See Clifton Morgan and Christopher Anderson's note for an excellent exposition on diversionary war theory (Morgan and Anderson 1999). Another scholar concluded that "seldom has so much common sense in theory found so little support in practice." (James 1987, p. 22)

²⁹ Tir and his co-author have also found some support for domestic diversion, which they describe as a widely available and risk-averse option for many leaders. (Tir and Jasinski 2008)

territorial threats are present by making nationalism and hardline foreign policy positions more palatable.

The use of nationalism and the elevation of hardliners at the expense of non-hardliners heightens the risk of international conflict for democratizing states. The preceding discussion suggests that the management of territorial issues will be hampered by the processes involved in democratic transitions. Two states might have been able to, if not resolve, peacefully manage their territorial disagreement without resorting to force.³⁰ The initiation of a democratic transition in one of the two states will complicate their ability to reach a compromise and heighten tensions between the two countries. In the next two sections, I outline the implications of this logic for territorial claims and militarized disputes.

3.7 Escalation of Territorial Disagreements

The logic that has been presented above suggests that processes of democratization are detrimental for the prospects of peace in situations where territory is a salient point of contention between states. Perhaps hazardous for the well-being of the populations in states that are involved, states frequently find themselves in situations where two or more have contesting claims to the same territory. These are cases and situations in which we should expect the process of democratization to exacerbate existing difficulties of managing relations between two states. When one state enters a democratic transition, the mechanisms described earlier promote nationalism and aid hardliners in their bid for power. The presence of a more galvanized population, that is now able to directly participate in politics, make politicians wary of attempting to find compromises to

³⁰ The ability of states to avoid militarized conflict over territorial claims vary greatly over time. In the post-Cold War era, only six territorial claims (13 percent) have produced fatalities while 23 percent of claims experienced fatal conflict in the 19th century (Frederick et al. 2017). For more descriptive statistics on territorial claims, see Chapters 4 and 5.

resolve the disputed claim. Not only does it make claims harder to settle, but governments will also be more likely to opt for aggressive options during the lifespan of the claim.

This suggests two hypotheses related to territorial claims. These hypotheses test the claim that processes of democratization exacerbate the risk of conflict in situations where territory is a salient issue.

H1: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a territorial claim between two states will escalate to a militarized dispute in any given year

H2: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a territorial claim between two states will escalate to war in any given year

3.8 Peaceful Settlement and Resolution of Territorial Disagreements

The argument that I have outlined in this chapter does not only have implications for conflict initiation and escalation. If I am correct, incomplete democratic transitions should have observable effects on the willingness and ability of leaders to seek peaceful resolutions to territorial disagreements with other states. Specifically, I suggest that incomplete democratization will reduce the likelihood of peaceful settlement attempts in the presence of an external threat. This aspect of incomplete democratization – that is, the potential impact on the prospects of peaceful settlement attempts – has not been addressed previously by scholars studying the topic.

Are democratizers more or less inclined to peacefully settle disagreements with other states? Neither Mansfield and Snyder (e.g., 2005) nor their critics provide answers to this question. Scholars examining different regime types and have provided us with some insights into the differences between democracies, autocracies, and anocracies. This literature, however, has mainly

been concerned with conflict initiation instead of termination³¹³² and primarily with stable regimes instead of those in transition. In an attempt at formulating a theory of war termination, Dan Reiter (2009) draws on insights regarding information and commitment from the literature on war initiation. Reiter argues that information dynamics shape a belligerent's expectations of continued fighting. Engaging the enemy on the battlefield reveals valuable information about the balance of power and the probability of emerging victorious. Certainty about the outcome is, however, not enough. Those who are engaged in fighting are also concerned with ensuring that peace settlements are not going to be violated shortly after the fighting has stopped. Thus, Reiter proposes that it is the combination of information and the combatants' view of possible commitment mechanics that determine war termination. Domestic political characteristics and dynamics largely lie outside the scope of this rationalist theory of war termination.

In earlier work, Goemans (2000) addressed the issue of war termination, largely focusing on domestic regime characteristics and incentives, in a pathbreaking book that used both quantitative analysis and case studies of countries in the First World War. Goemans argued that leaders of anocracies are particularly unlikely to choose to terminate a conflict because of the likely consequences that they would face if they end a war while on unfavorable terms. Whereas democratic and autocratic leaders only face severe consequences if they lose a war disastrously, leaders of anocracies are severely punished regardless of whether they suffer a disastrous or moderate loss in a war (Goemans, 2000, pp. 37-51). Although Goemans is specifically interested the termination of war, not disputes or territorial claims, his study illustrates the impact of the

³¹ Dan Reiter (2009), among others, have highlighted this curious gap in the literature and grabbed a shovel to start filling it in.

³² Prior to Reiter's (2009) critical piece on how wars end, only a select number of works had specifically addressed war termination instead of initiation. Some prominent examples include Paul Kecskemeti (1958), Fred Ikle (1971), Pillar (1983), and Goemans (2000).

institutional context in which leaders of different regimes operate and that leaders of anocracies having particularly strong incentives to avoid terminating a dispute. Stanley (2009a) builds on bargaining models of conflict termination (e.g., Bennett and Stam 1998; Reiter 2003; Slantchev 2003; Wagner 2000) by focusing on leadership change as a pathway to peace. In her theory of domestic coalition shifts, Stanley (2009a, 2009b) argues that coalition shifts allow different political actors – with different constituencies, political interests, and assessments of the war – to take power. These new domestic coalitions may implement changes in war policy, making it more likely that peace settlements can be reached between the belligerents. Both Goemans (2002) and Stanley (2009b) highlight the way in which domestic political context and institutions make war termination a viable proposition. Similarly, I suggest that leaders of democratizing states are put in a position where they want to avoid compromising with foreign leaders due to the pressure and threat that their domestic political opposition can bring to bear on the regime.

Within the issue research program, scholars have mainly focused their research activity on identifying the conditions which lead states to conflictual policy decisions. A few scholars, primarily Paul Hensel and his collaborators associated with the Issue Correlates of War project, have previously examined the propensity of states to use different tools to settle territorial disagreements. Hensel (2001) finds that pairs of states with territorial issues are more likely to act if the territory in question is viewed as more valuable, which can be the case if the territory in question contains natural resources or is of strategic importance. Scholars have also considered the salience-level of different issues and the way in which salience impacts the likelihood that disputes will be resolved. Highly salient issues are more likely to see the disputing parties initiate both hostile and peaceful attempts at resolving the dispute (Hensel et al. 2008). Not only does salience vary between issues, but it can also vary within the same issue area. For example, although some

territorial issues may be perceived as highly salient, other territorial issues can be of less consequence.³³ Focusing on the ability of third-parties to help states find resolutions to their territorial disagreements, Gent and Shannon (2010) find that binding settlements are more effective than nonbinding third party or bilateral negotiations in ending territorial claims (see also, Dixon 1996, Gent and Shannon 2011, Mitchell and Hensel 2007). Hansen et al. (2008) considered the ability of international organizations to help disputing parties find peaceful resolutions to territorial claims and found that highly institutionalized and democratic international organizations can help disputing parties settle their territorial claims through binding management techniques (Hansen et al. 2008). Even though binding agreements are not equal to agreements found in domestic politics, they appear to be uniquely powerful in helping states reach and comply with agreements to end their disputes. Powell and Wiegand (2010) take a different approach, arguing that the domestic legal system of a state determines the choice of peaceful resolution of disputes. States tend to choose methods of dispute resolution that are like those embedded in their domestic legal systems. I add to this research program by considering the potential impact of incomplete democratic transitions on the ability of disputing parties to peacefully settle their disputes.

As I have previously discussed, one prominent example of an external threat is the existence of a disagreement in the form of a territorial claim. When a territorial claim is present, states have a disagreement over a piece of territory with a clearly defined foreign entity with whom it can engage. States have an array of policy tools at their disposal that they can use to address these disagreements with other states. These different policy tools can largely be divided into two distinct categories. Leaders that are interested in resolving an outstanding territorial claim can

³³ Two examples can illustrate this point. Haiti claimed the Navassa Islands from the United States. These islands do not offer any significant military or economic benefits and qualifies as a territorial claim with low salience. An example of a highly salient territorial claim is the Golan Heights, contested by Israel and Syria. The Golan Heights territory is of both economic and strategic importance to both sides of the conflict.

attempt to settle the issue by using military force. Alternatively, they may decide to try and find a peaceful resolution to the issue. Above, I argued that conflict over territorial claims becomes more likely in the presence of incomplete democratizers. Here, I also suggest that incomplete democratization reduces the probability that states will seek out and engage in peaceful settlement attempts of territorial claims.

The logic that I have discussed in this chapter suggests that leaders of states going through democratic transitions are wary of peaceful settlements that include foreign policy compromises due to the threat posed by domestic political actors. If the regime does not appear sufficiently protective of the state or nation, others vying for power will be tempted to make hardline, nationalistic bids for power. Notably, this is likely to be the case regardless of whether the current regime previously mobilized support using a nationalistic agenda or not. If the regime did use nationalistic rhetoric to mobilize support and win power, their supporters will view the decision to compromise over precious territorial issues as a betrayal and withdraw support from the party. In the case that the government came to power without using nationalistic rhetoric, they are still trapped in a situation where compromises with foreign entities can be used by the domestic political opposition to mount a potent challenge to their rule.

Leaders that are faced with attempting to find a resolution to a territorial disagreement with another state will consider the domestic ramifications of their options. At their disposal is a wide array of different peaceful and conflictual options that would allow them to potentially address the issue. Previously, I have argued that we should expect violent means of resolving an issue to become more likely in the presence of incomplete democratization. However, Hensel et al. (2008) find that both peaceful and conflictual approaches become more likely the higher the salience of the claim. Should we expect incomplete democratization to have a similar effect; increasing the

likelihood that states will seek peaceful resolutions as well as conflictual resolutions to their disputes? I suggest that this is not the case. Governments in incomplete democratic transitions are likely to fear the consequences of seeking peaceful settlement attempts and will therefore shy away from them. Forging a peaceful compromise with a foreign foe increases the likelihood that domestic political opponents will launch an effective nationalistic challenge against the government. This dynamic leads the government to take a more hardline stance than it otherwise might prefer, or even desires.

H3: The presence of an incomplete democratizer reduces the likelihood that territorial claims will experience peaceful settlement attempts

3.9 Heterogenous Effects Across Issues

The hypotheses that have been introduced above suggest that instances of incomplete democratization have certain effects when territory is a salient issue. These hypotheses were derived by taking Mansfield and Snyder's (e.g., 2005) argument regarding democratization and conflict seriously and identifying contexts in which it is likely to apply. However, territorial issues are only one type of issue over which states can have disagreements. What about other types of issues? Earlier in this chapter I suggest that the effects of incomplete democratic transitions, in contexts where territory is the salient issue, are not necessarily the same as contexts where states contend over other types of issues.

States contend over non-territorial issues in international politics is an eclectic group and include a wide range of issues from various policies to the structure of political regimes. A prominent example of a disagreement between states include attempts by the United Kingdom to end the practice of slave trade by other states. The Slave Trade Act of 1807 and the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 effectively prohibited slavery throughout the British Empire. In addition to

abolishing slavery within the British Empire, the British also made it illegal to use British ships to transport slaves; a provision which the Royal Navy also started to apply to ships from other nations. The pressure brought on slave traders by the British Empire caused significant friction with other states, most notably Portugal and Brazil, whose ships were subjected to British jurisdiction. States may also attempt to alter or replace governments of other states, which for obvious reasons might cause disputes over what the desired outcome is. These disagreements, ranging from slave trade to attempts at replacing or altering regimes, are examples of non-territorial issues over which states have disputes and at times lead to the use of military force and conflict.

In addition to territorial issues, we then have two additional and distinct categories that we can use to distinguish different types of issues. These three categories – territorial, policy, and regime – have frequently been used in previous literature and can help us examine whether the effects of incomplete democratization hold across different issue types. The empirical distinction and categorization of different types of issues is further addressed in coming chapters and used to evaluate hypotheses 4 through 9, located below.

H4: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states will escalate to war

H5: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over a territorial issue will escalate to war

H6: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over non-territorial issues will escalate to war

H7: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states will see fatalities

H8: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over a territorial issue will see fatalities

H9: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over non-territorial issues will see fatalities

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have put forward a theory linking democratization to foreign policy behavior. In contrast to previous scholarship, I have specified certain conditions and contexts in which democratization should increase the risk of international conflict and reduce the chances of states seeking peaceful resolutions to their disagreement. When states contend over territorial issues, the introduction of processes of democratization allows political actors to turn to belligerent and hardline foreign policy proposals to mobilize domestic support. Consequently, conflict with other states becomes more likely and the prospects of peacefully resolving disagreements dim. To test my argument, I have introduced nine different hypotheses that will be evaluated in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I have put forward an argument involving the relationship between incomplete democratic transitions and foreign policy behavior. I suggested that, instead of attempting to find a general relationship between incomplete democratization and conflict, we should look for situations where theory suggests that democratization should have an effect. Specifically, I believe that this is the case when states have salient, external threats, primarily territorial. In this chapter, I take the first steps towards empirically evaluating the argument and hypotheses that I have proposed. The first task that we must grapple with is the movement from theoretical concepts to variables and measurements, as well as the identification of the comparisons that will provide us with appropriate empirical tests. I start this section with a discussion of the comparisons that I will be making and the operationalization of the core variables that will be used in the following empirical chapters.

Any empirical study of regime transition and conflict needs to operationalize these two concepts. The main outcome of interest in the following chapters is international conflict. I include measurements for two distinct types of conflict – militarized interstate disputes and war -- that are used to capture this concept. In addition, I have also proposed that incomplete democratization may prevent states from seeking peaceful resolutions to existing disputes. Accordingly, I also discuss variables relating to peaceful settlement attempts of international, territorial disagreements. It should be noted that none of the variables that are used for these empirical analyses are my innovations. Instead, they follow conventions in the field that have been readapted to examine the questions that I have posed in preceding chapters.

4.2 Finding the Right Comparisons

The first set of hypotheses suggested that the presence of incomplete democratizers will heighten the risk of conflict in situations where states have territorial disagreements. I argued that it is in these situations that nationalism will be available, and potent, to domestic political actors as a political strategy. To evaluate whether processes of democratization have these effects on conflict, we need to identify contexts in which territory is present as a contentious issue between states. It is not surprising that territorial disagreements and disputes are frequent in international politics and states frequently have contending claims to the same piece of land. Do processes of democratization heighten the risk of conflict or reduce the chances of finding a peaceful settlement to the disagreement? In the ideal comparison, it would be possible to observe two identical dyads (pairs of states) that are contesting a piece of territory. We would then initiate a democratic transition for one of the states in one of the two dyads. This would, in experimental language, be the ‘treatment’. We could then observe the impact of incomplete democratization on the likelihood of conflict in contexts where territory is salient when processes of democratization are present and when they are absent. In addition, we would also be able to design experiments in which we have both states enter a democratic transition to examine whether it is enough with the presence of incomplete democratization in one of the states, if both need to enter a transition, or whether having two transitioning states merely amplifies the effect.

As social scientists interested in identifying causality, it is an unfortunate fact of life that history does not frequently deign to adjust itself according to our whims and wishes. History rarely provides us with instances of natural randomization, or the opportunity to create randomization, for questions within the field of conflict and peace studies. Without the ability to conduct a controlled experiment, or available natural experiments, we must get by with observational data,

statistical analysis, and careful modeling. This has long been the standard within the field of international relations and has, fortunately, resulted in a situation where we have data on interactions between states on a range of topics. Among these, we can find data on whether states have been involved in disagreements over territory, their regime type, and whether they have experienced international conflicts.

4.3 Measuring Conflict and Issues

The Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Dataset provides a universe of cases where pairs of states have issued competing claims over territory. In broad terms, ICOW is a research project that collects data on contentious issues in international politics. ICOW is currently involved in collecting data on four types of issues: territorial, river, maritime, and identity. The first of these, on territorial issues, is the one of interest for us in this project. A territorial claim is defined as an “explicit contention” between two (or more) states over a specific piece of territory. A case is included in the dataset if official government representatives from different states make explicit statements claiming sovereignty over the same tract of land. ICOW’s dataset on territorial claims spans the period from 1816 to 2001 for the entire globe.³⁴ The total number of claimed territories included in the dataset is 372.³⁵ This dataset provides me with the opportunity to investigate whether the presence of ongoing democratic transitions complicates the management of territorial claims and heightens the risk of international conflict in situations where territory is a salient issue. It is possible to compare territorial claims in which the involved states are stable regimes and those in which at least one of the involved states has initiated a democratic transition. I expect that the

³⁴ This is for the collection of the main variables included in the dataset. ICOW has collect additional data on the settlement of territorial claims in the Western Hemisphere and researchers are currently collecting additional data for the rest of the world. These incomplete additional variables are not used in this study.

³⁵ Two states can, and often have, more than one territorial claim between each other during this lengthy time period.

presence of at least one democratizing state will heighten the risk of conflict initiation. The ICOW territorial claims data are used in models and analyses in chapter 5 to test hypotheses 1 through 3.

The second set of hypotheses are aimed at distinguishing whether the effect of democratic transitions on conflict and foreign policy vary across different types of issues. I argued that the effect of incomplete democratization is present in situations where territory is a salient issue, but not for other types of issues. This part of the argument, and associated hypotheses, are distinct from that put forward by Mansfield and Snyder. Examining these hypotheses provides us with a way of empirically distinguishing between the argument that I have put forward and that of Mansfield and Snyder. Where do we find data on different types of issues that states can have disagreements over? Although the ICOW data does attempt to distinguish between different types of claims, the distinction between contention over territorial claims vis-à-vis river or maritime claims is not clear enough. Are river or maritime similar enough to territorial claims that we should not expect any difference between the three? To remove any questions relating to this distinction, I opt for a different set of issues contained in another dataset to remove ambiguities regarding the differences between river, maritime, and territorial claims.³⁶

I use the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) 4.1 dataset, produced by the Correlates of War project, to distinguish between different issue types. The MID dataset catalogues information on conflicts between states in which one or more states threaten, display, or use force against one or more other states. The cases included in the MID dataset are not the same as those that are included in datasets that attempt to record wars. The MID dataset records disputes between members of the international system where official government representatives have taken hostile

³⁶ Researchers involved with the ICOW project maintain that these issues are distinct and that they have different theoretical and observable empirical implications. Future work on the topic should use the ICOW project as an additional, alternative source of different types of issues.

actions short of war.³⁷ The MID project considers three different types of incidents that researchers within the project consider militarized disputes; threats, displays of force, and the use of force. Threats are verbal indications of hostile intent made by official government representatives. Displays of force involve some demonstration of military might but an absence of combat interaction. The use of force represents the highest of the three categories and includes cases where force has been used to make an impact on a target. This includes events such as blockades and occupation of territory, all of which have a direct effect on the target of the action.

For our purposes here, it is important to note that the MID project contains information indicating the type of issue that was under contention in a dispute. This information is extracted from the MID dataset using the “revisionist” variables contained therein. MID researchers have attempted to code four different types of issues; territory, policy, regime, and a category of other issues. Unfortunately, it is often not an easy task to identify the issue under contention and many disputes have therefore been recorded as having no issue recorded. Territory refers to attempts by a state to gain control over a piece of territory to which it has a claim but does not currently control. Policy disputes refer to those in which states seek to change the foreign policy behavior of another state. Regime disputes are those in which a state seeks to change the government of another state.³⁸ This variation in the MID data provides an opportunity to examine whether the impact of incomplete democratic transitions on the likelihood of conflict is conditioned by the type of issue under contention. The discussion in the preceding chapter posited that the presence of incomplete democratizers will make it more difficult for two states to find a peaceful solution to a militarized

³⁷ Wars are often defined using a few different criteria. The most crucial of these criteria is a threshold number of battle deaths that is required in a 12-month period for a militarized conflict to be classified as a war.

³⁸ There are many disputes for which the MID researchers have been unable to determine whether a specific issue was at stake. These disputes are dropped from the models presented in chapter 6.

dispute if the issue under contention is territorial. I further suggested that incomplete democratization is not likely to have the same impact over other types of issues. The MID data allow me to test these hypotheses in a systematic way.

4.4 Measuring Levels of International Conflict

International conflict comes in many different shapes. Here, I focus on two main types; full-scale interstate wars and militarized disputes. Interstate wars are conflicts between members of the international system that consist of ongoing violence and generate thousands of battle fatalities. Militarized disputes are instances of conflict between states short of war. They may involve the threat of force, display of force, or even the use of force, but not at a scale that is normally considered all-out war. The project includes both types to examine whether the effect of ongoing or incomplete cases of democratization heightens the risk of different levels of severity. It could be, for instance, that incomplete democratization only heightens the risk of lower level conflicts such as militarized disputes but not of war. By examining more than one type of international conflict I can issue more general claims of the impact of democratization than if the analyses were limited to one type.

Creating measurements for conflict does not require one to reinvent the wheel. Quantitative studies of war have long relied on several reputable datasets that catalogue the incidence of war in the international system. I rely on two different, well-established datasets on war in the operationalization of the conflict variables that are included in the analyses. The first is the Correlates of War (COW) Project and its extensive dataset on war. The second dataset that I use is the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset. COW data is used to construct variables for war while the MID dataset is used to construct measures for militarized disputes short of war.

The COW project provides an extensive typology of war including inter-state wars, extra-state wars, intra-state wars, and non-state wars. This project uses data on inter-state wars from the COW project.³⁹ An inter-state war is defined as a conflict in which a member of the interstate system is engaged in war with another system member. The conflict needs to exhibit sustained combat involving regular forces on both sides and at least 1,000 battle-related fatalities among all parties involved in the conflict. For a state to qualify as a participant in a war they need to fulfill one of two criteria: a minimum of 100 fatalities or a minimum of 1,000 armed personnel engaged in active combat (Resort to Arms). The temporal domain of the COW list of wars is 1816 through 2007. In total, COW researchers have identified 95 distinct inter-state wars in this timeframe. These wars vary in the number of combatants from dyadic wars only involving two parties to multiparty wars such as the First and Second World Wars.⁴⁰

The MID dataset, as was mentioned earlier, contains information on international conflicts between system members that do not meet the criteria for inter-state war. These instances of threats, displays, and use of force are all hostile actions short of war. These types of disputes are more common than wars in the international system and involve many different types of states. Democracies, even though they have not fought wars against each other, have engaged each other in militarized interstate disputes. It should also be noted that although some disputes lead to more extensive warfare an overwhelming majority of disputes do not experience escalation to war. These two variables provide us with two different levels of international conflict and allows us to

³⁹ A possible point of concern here is that other types of wars also should be included. For example, a state can have external conflicts with non-state actors. The theoretical argument discussed on the preceding questions primarily highlighted the management of relations between states, not between states and potential non-state actors. Similarly, the argument did not discuss internal relations within a state and the inclusion of intra-state wars would not be appropriate.

examine whether democratization only heightens the risk of lower-level conflicts, in the form of MIDs, or also lead to higher-level conflicts, in the form of wars.

4.5 Peaceful Settlement Attempts

The previous sections describe variables that will be used to examine the first two hypotheses. The third hypothesis suggests that, in addition to exacerbating the risk of war, incomplete democratization will also have a negative impact on the likelihood that states will attempt to settle existing disagreements and disputes peacefully. In addition to data on conflict, we also need to create variables that suggest a willingness to resolve disagreements peacefully.⁴¹ To obtain data on peaceful settlement attempts, in the context of territorial disagreements, I again pull data from the Issue Correlates of War project (Frederick et al. 2017).

Researchers working within the ICOW project has collected data on whether parties to a territorial claim have attempted to resolve the disagreement peacefully. Unfortunately, data on settlement attempts are currently only available for the Western Hemisphere and Europe.⁴² There are a total of 1004 peaceful settlement attempts across all territorial claims in these regions of the world.⁴³ According to the logic introduced in chapter 3, we should expect territorial claim dyads with at least one democratizing state should be less likely to attempt to undertake, or accept offer of, peaceful settlement. In the analyses, the variable for peaceful settlement attempts is binary with a 1 representing a peaceful settlement attempt and a 0 representing the lack of an attempt to find a peaceful resolution.

⁴¹ This proposition is not the same as that of “positive peace” that has been advanced in the field (Galtung 1971).

⁴² ICOW researchers are currently in the processes of collecting data on peaceful settlement attempts for the entire world.

⁴³ ICOW’s data on settlement attempts also include non-peaceful settlement attempts. These are not included in the analyses presented here.

4.6 Measuring Regime Transitions

Having identified the cases that will allow me to make comparisons, we also need measurements for different regime types to identify democratic transitions. The central argument of this dissertation untangles the relationship between democratic transitions and international conflict. Different types of transitions are expected to have different impacts on the probability of conflict. Specifically, I argued that incomplete transitions are likely to exacerbate the risk of war in situations where states contend over territory. These are all movements toward democracy that do not produce a regime with free and fair political competition, government accountability, and democratic institutions. Transitions that have reached a point where they have ended in these characteristics are considered complete transitions and are therefore not included in the concept of an incomplete democratic transition.

The current convention in the field is to construct measures for democracy, and democratic transitions, based on data from the Polity project (Marshall et al. 2013). This project does not break that mold when constructing measurements for the main analyses found in the next two chapters. There are several reasons as to why this is the case. First, using established datasets that other scholars have frequently used in existing literature allows for easy comparison of results. A potential problem for many research programs and disciplines is the tendency to rely on different datasets and ways of measuring variables, which renders the field unable to advance knowledge in a collaborative and cumulative fashion.⁴⁴ Research on democratic transitions and conflict has primarily used the Polity and allows for the results that I present here to be compared to the existing literature. Second, the extensive coverage of Polity allows me to analyze all major, independent

⁴⁴ That is not to say that there is no merit in considering whether the measurements and datasets that we have are appropriate and if they can be improved. For the purposes of this study, I believe that existing datasets and operationalizations fit the theoretical conception of regimes and transitions discussed in chapter 3.

states between 1800 and 2015. This is also the period during which democratic regimes became more numerous and have also exhibited some fluctuation in number. Third, the use of Polity also makes it possible to distinguish between different types of transitions. The data set does not code regime type as a binary choice between democracy and non-democracy⁴⁵, but also allows for regimes to exist between these poles. The dataset can therefore be used to code incomplete transitions and complete transitions as well as autocratic reversals. Fourth, the Polity dataset covers a time-period during which nationalism emerged as a phenomenon in politics in many, but not all, states. Nationalism, as a phenomenon and political strategy, is a new concern for voters and politicians, much like the political regimes that we consider “liberal democracies.”

The main variable of interest in the Polity IV dataset is a 21-point summary measure of regime type. The variable is constructed by differencing two indices of a state’s democratic and autocratic characteristics on a yearly basis. The lowest score (-10) represents a “hereditary monarchy” and the highest score (+10) constitutes a consolidated democracy. Polity scores can be divided into different categories of regime type. At the lower end of the spectrum (-10 to -6) we find “autocracies,” the middle range (-5 to +5) are labeled “anocracies), and the upper range (+6 to +10) represents “democracies.” Autocratic regimes are characterized by limited political participation, restricted opposition to the ruling regime, few checks on the executive branch, and leaders that are designated or hereditary. Democratic regimes have regular, orderly competition in the domestic arena, a chief executive that is checked by other institutions of government, and leaders that depend on popular support to remain in their positions. Anocracies, those regimes found in-between autocracy and democracy, combine elements of the other two ideal types. Anocracies may, for example, hold regularly scheduled elections but these are not necessarily held

⁴⁵ Such as Democracy and Dictatorship by Cheibub et al. (2010).

fully competitive and may advantage certain groups or parties over others. The chief executive may also have fewer restraints on their power compared to their counterparts in democracies. These differences theoretical distinctions and the Polity dataset are used to create three categories of regime type, and the ability to observe whether and when a state has crossed from one group into another.

The main independent variables used in the following analyses attempt to capture whether a state has moved from the authoritarian category to the middle category. That is, an *incomplete democratic transition* takes place when an authoritarian regime starts to include democratic characteristics, but it has not yet reached the status of a fully matured, institutionalized democracy. This is a binary measurement of whether a state has moved from autocracy to anocracy in the past five years and is coded as 1 if such a transition has taken place and 0 in every other case.⁴⁶ In figure 3, located below, we can see the number of countries that were considered to be in a state of incomplete democratization in each year (from 1816 through 2015). The peak is at the end of the last century with just over 25 countries. For the remainder of the time-period, the number of states that experienced some form of democratic transition in each year rarely reaches above ten. There are a couple of takeaways from this. First, there are not very many countries in each year that are going through a transition. Second, it has become slightly more common over time for states to transition to democracy.

⁴⁶ The Polity dataset does not have data for every member of the international system in every year. For years with missing data the variable is coded as missing. Similarly, it is also coded as missing for values of -66, -77, and -88.

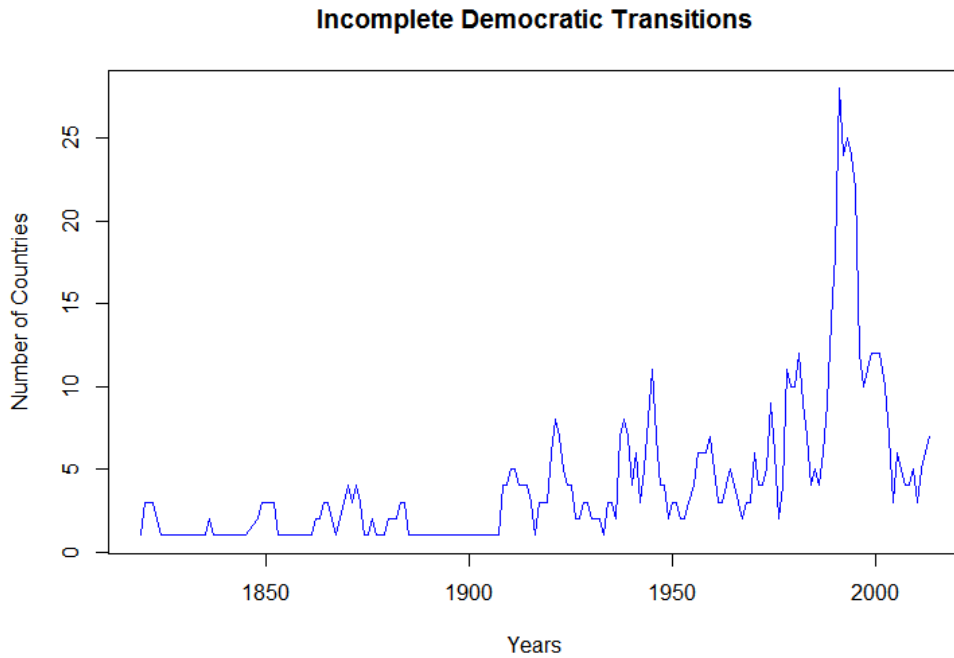


Figure 3: Incomplete Democratic Transitions by Year

A potential concern regarding the democratization variables is that the thresholds for different regime categories have been arbitrarily placed. The difference between a regime that is scored as a -7 and another that is scored as a -6 is not necessarily that obvious to the observer. A relatively small change of one or two points in the Polity index can still lead us to code a change in regime type even though the substantive change is not that great. I address this concern by showing that the specific thresholds that are used have no impact on the substantive results. Placing the threshold for autocracy at -7, -6, or -5 on the Polity scale does not appear to change the conclusions that we can draw from the analyses presented in the coming two chapters.

Are five-year intervals appropriate? There are certain theoretical justifications for choosing to focus on transition periods with a window of five years. The five-year period is not so long that we might expect events at the end of the period to be unrelated to events at the beginning of the same. Opening the political system, organizing political actors, and competing for power is likely

to play out over time and does not necessarily happen immediately in the year that a democratic transition is initiated. In other word, the dynamics created by democratization are not likely to be instantaneous. The causal mechanism that was discussed in the preceding chapters may take a few years to impact both domestic and foreign policies of a country, which justifies using a window of five years. However, this is also an empirical question that can be examined by varying the length of the transition. I therefore include analyses for additional lengths of time in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Incomplete Democratization and Territorial Claims

5.1 Introduction

This chapter starts the process of empirically evaluating the claims that I have advanced in preceding chapters. Do ongoing processes of democratization impact the ability of states to peacefully resolve their disagreements in situations where territory is a salient point of contention? I argue that we can improve our understanding of the relationship between democratic transitions and their impact on international politics by focusing on specific contexts. In chapter 3, I argued that processes of democratization impede the ability of states to resolve their disagreements peacefully in situations where territory is a salient point of contention. The combination of external territorial threats and the political dynamics of democratizing states -- fierce political competition, nationalism, weak domestic institutions, and populations that are not accustomed to democracy -- creates a domestic political context that enables domestic foreign policy hardliners. As a result, belligerent and non-compromising foreign policies become more likely. This situation represents a dangerous cocktail that hampers international cooperation and reduces the prospects for international peace.

I proposed two specific and testable predictions based on this theory. First, incomplete democratization will increase the risk of conflict in situations where territory is a salient issue. Second, the presence of incomplete democratization in settings where territory is salient reduces the likelihood that states will attempt to seek peaceful resolutions to their disagreements. I derived severable testable hypotheses based on this theoretical argument of which three are reprinted below and empirically evaluated in this chapter.

H1: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a territorial claim between two states will escalate to a militarized dispute

H2: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a territorial claim between two states will escalate to war

H3: The presence of an incomplete democratizer reduces the likelihood that a territorial claim will experience peaceful settlement attempts

In this chapter, I use data on territorial claims from the Issue Correlates of War Project (ICOW), together with variables discussed in the previous chapter, to evaluate the merits of these hypotheses. The results suggest that incomplete democratization has several effects on the peace and conflict resolution for dyads with territorial claims. First, incomplete democratization is associated with a heightened risk of militarized interstate disputes. Second, incomplete democratization increases the likelihood of escalation to war among states with contending territorial claims. Lastly, territorial claim dyads with at least one incomplete democratizer are significantly less likely to attempt to find peaceful solutions to their territorial disagreements.

These findings support the argument in chapter 3. Ongoing, or stalled, democratic transitions appear to exacerbate the difficulties of managing territorial disagreements. Leaders that might otherwise have attempted to seek peaceful resolutions to their disagreements are less likely to do so in the presence of a democratic transition and we instead observe a higher likelihood that territorial disagreements will produce violent conflict. Next, I describe the data, methods, and models that were used to obtain these findings. This is followed by a presentation of the findings and a discussion of their implications.

5.2 Territorial Claims and Incomplete Democratization

I identify a universe of cases with competing claims to territory by using data from the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) dataset (Frederick et al. 2017).⁴⁷ In total, the dataset identifies

⁴⁷ See Chapter 4 for a detailed description of this dataset.

843 different territorial claims among states. In the models below, I use the dyad-claim-year, constructed using the territorial claims from ICOW, as the unit of analysis. This results in a total of 11298 dyad-years during which two states has had a formal territorial disagreement. This setup allows for examination of the potential effects of incomplete democratic transitions for territorial claims. The main independent variable, incomplete democratization, refers to instances where a state has transitioned towards democracy from autocracy but is not yet considered a fully institutionalized democracy.⁴⁸ The variable is dichotomous and based on the Polity IV dataset (Marshall et al. 2002). This variable is coded as 1 if a state has crossed over the threshold for anocracy (-5 to +5) from autocracy (-6 and below) in the past five years. If no such transition has taken place, the variable is coded as 0.⁴⁹

5.3 Dependent Variables

The three hypotheses examined here all examine different outcomes. Accordingly, the models use three distinct dependent variables: the initiation of a militarized dispute, war initiation, and peaceful settlement attempts. I draw data on militarized interstate disputes from the Correlates of War Project (Palmer et al. 2015), which was discussed in-depth in the previous chapter. Recall from the previous chapter that the MID 4.1 dataset includes any instance where a state threatened, displayed, or used force against another state. In the models presented here, a variable is included that indicates whether a territorial claim produced a militarized interstate dispute in each year. If a dispute took place, the variable takes on a value of 1, otherwise the recorded value is 0. The second conflict variable is included to evaluate the second hypothesis and captures the escalation of

⁴⁸ See Chapter 4 for a detailed description of this variable and associated data.

⁴⁹ A portion of the Polity data is also coded as not available or otherwise cannot be used here. This is, for example, the case for certain civil wars and other situations where there either is not a formally recognized government, or it is unclear which group that is governing the country. These are dropped from the analyses.

territorial claims to a more severe level of conflict, that of full-scale war. This variable is extracted from the latest version of the ICOW dataset (Frederick et al. 2017), where researchers have directly coded whether a territorial claim produced a war based on the Correlates of War dataset of interstate wars.

Data on peaceful settlement attempts are again pulled from the ICOW project (Frederick et al. 2017). Unfortunately, data on settlement attempts are currently only available for the Western Hemisphere and Europe.⁵⁰ There are a total of 1004 peaceful settlement attempts across all territorial claims in these regions of the world.⁵¹ According to the logic introduced in chapter 3, we should expect territorial claim dyads with at least one democratizing state should be less likely to attempt to undertake, or accept offer of, peaceful settlement. These three variables – MID initiation, war initiation, and peaceful settlement attempts – are used as the dependent variables in the following models.

5.4 Control Variables

I include several control variables in the models below. These are meant to account for arguments and variables that have previously attracted the interest of scholars studying international conflict and conflict management. First, I account for whether at least one of the parties to the dispute is a major power.⁵² Major powers have long been at the center of attention in international relations scholarship (e.g., Morgenthau 1960; Mearsheimer 2001; Vasquez 1993; Waltz 1979). Interactions between major powers have traditionally been thought of as qualitatively different than politics between lesser states. Wars among great powers have the potential of leading

⁵⁰ ICOW researchers are currently in the processes of collecting data on peaceful settlement attempts for the entire world.

⁵¹ ICOW's data on settlement attempts also include non-peaceful settlement attempts. These are not included in the analyses presented here.

⁵² For a recent exposition of the literature on power in international politics and its relation to international conflict, see Gibler (2017).

to the upheaval and reorganization of the international system in which they take place. In addition, major powers also have the capabilities to fight distant wars against states that are not necessarily geographically proximate. In the models, this variable is dichotomous with a 1 representing the presence of at least one major power.

I further control for the lowest level of democracy within a dyad. If the democratic peace literature is correct, we should expect states that are jointly more democratic to be able to better manage their territorial disputes. Some evidence supports this notion, suggesting that democratic states are unlikely to have border disputes (Gibler 2012; Owsiak 2012). I operationalize dyadic democracy using the weakest link principle and include a variable that measures the lowest Polity-score of the two disputants in each year. This variable is constructed using data from the Polity-project (Marshall et al. 2002).

A different strand of the conflict literature has focused on military alliances as either impediments or catalysts of international conflict (e.g., Benson et al. 2014; Kenwick et al. 2015; Leeds 2003; Leeds et al. 2000; Senese and Vasquez 2008). There is currently an ongoing and lively debate on the topic with numerous pieces appearing in academic journals (e.g., Leeds and Johnson 2017; Kenwick and Vasquez 2017; Morrow 2017). I therefore include a variable to indicate whether two states were allied with each other in each year of the dataset.⁵³ I draw data on alliances from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset (Leeds et al. 2002). Scholars have also identified a significant relationship between geography and conflict. Bremer (1992) observed that states bordering each other are much more likely to become involved in international conflict. In his analysis, covering the period from 1816 through 1965, contiguous states were 35

⁵³ The variable that is presented in the models simply state whether two states held an alliance in the given year. Including measurements for whether states had outside allies does not change these results.

times more likely to fight a war than non-contiguous states. A dichotomous variable indicating whether a pair of states are contiguous or not is therefore taken into consideration here.

5.5 Model Construction and Threats to Inference

Achen (2005) called attention to the tendency of political scientists to carelessly include a plethora of explanatory variables in statistical models. Although it is often desirable to account for potentially intervening variables, Achen argues that the inclusion of large numbers of independent variables renders it near impossible to properly interpret any coefficients that are produced by models saturated with variables. Achen suggests that researchers should restrict their samples to only include those observations that are relevant for the specific theory that the researcher proposed to test. To alleviate concerns on this score, I have limited my sample to only include pairs of states with territorial claims. This universe of cases is a good fit for testing the logic that is laid out in Chapter 3. I argued that incomplete democratization should exacerbate the risk of conflict for states that have existing external threats in the form of territorial disagreements with other states. If the theoretical argument has any purchase, there should be a statistically significant and substantive effect of incomplete democratization on the ability of states to manage their territorial claims.

The theory and research design that I introduce in this chapter is specifically designed to answer these questions. This also means that my theoretical and policy-related claims based on this study are limited and restricted to the category of cases here. In other words, the claims that I make are only related to those instances in the real world that would fit the definition of a territorial claim that is proffered by ICOW. As an example, a current territorial claim exists between China and India over the border region of Arunachal Pradesh. Currently administered by India, the Chinese government claims large parts of the state and refer to the region as South Tibet. In 1962,

the state was temporarily occupied by Chinese forces during the Sino-Indian War. The territorial claim is explicit and still maintained by the Chinese government. China is also an example of an authoritarian state that could plausibly enter a democratic transition. This case, and others like it, are real examples of cases for which I suggest that the theoretical argument and associated statistical analyses should be applied.

To further address Achen's concerns, I take a step-wise approach to model construction in which I sequentially add more variables to the models that are presented here. The models included in the tables below therefore start by presenting the findings from a bivariate regression. The second model specification includes an additional two explanatory variables. In the third and final model, I include yet more explanatory variables that I have identified in the literature. Although this approach does not completely address all the concerns raised by Achen, it should go some way in providing assurance that the findings introduced here are robust and do not depend on the specific variables that are included in a model.

I also account for the possibility that there is temporal dependence in these models. It is possible that territorial claims become more, or less, likely to experience escalation to conflict over time. For example, the longer a claim exists it is possible that the parties to the claim become less likely to attempt to settle it peacefully. The classical way of dealing with temporal dependence is by introducing natural cubic splines (Beck et al. 1998). Splines, however, are often unintuitive and difficult to interpret. To use splines, the researcher is also required to select the appropriate number of knots without much clear guidance. In the models that are presented below, I instead use Carter and Signorino's (2010) cubic polynomial approach.⁵⁴ Carter and Signorino show that their approach provides similar results to those produced by cubic splines and argue that they require

⁵⁴ I also run models using the natural cubic spline-approach and find that the results are substantively similar and do not change the substantive interpretations of these results.

fewer assumptions to be implemented correctly. Three variables are used to implement the cubic polynomial approach: t (time since last MID), t^2 , and t^3 . In addition to temporal dependence, it is also the case that yearly observations within territorial claims are correlated with each other. To correct for this, the models that are presented below include clustered standard errors on territorial claim dyads.

5.6 Findings

The models, estimated using logistic regression, found in table 5.1 provide the relevant tests for hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis suggested that the presence of incomplete democratizers exacerbates the risk of militarized interstate disputes between states that have competing territorial claims. As stated above, all the models that are presented in table 5.1 use the cubic polynomial approach to account for temporal dependence. I use clustered standard errors to account for the fact that the models include observations from the same claim over multiple years. The model found in the first column of table 5.1 is the most parsimonious version and only includes the main explanatory variable, incomplete democratic transition. This model produces statistically significant and positive coefficients, suggesting that there is a relationship between incomplete democratic transitions and MID initiation. This coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

The model in the second column includes two additional explanatory variables, joint democracy and joint major power status, in the analysis. This model produces a coefficient for incomplete democratization that is very similar to that in the first column. The effect of incomplete democratization is robust to the inclusion of these two additional variables and still statistically significant at the 0.001 level. In other words, the effect of democratic transitions is not restricted to dyads with jointly high (low) levels of democracy. Even though there are different dynamics at

play for major and minor power dyads, it does not appear that this effect is limited to the subset of major-major dyads.

The third column introduces the full model using additional variables intended to account for alliance status, power parity, and contiguity. These characteristics of international dyads are commonly included in past literature and have been found to impact the likelihood of peace and conflict between states in international politics. In the full model, incomplete democratization remains statistically significant, at the 0.01 level, and positively associated with the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. This is the case across all three model specifications using different sets of explanatory variables. The similarity and consistency of the results found in these models suggest that the positive relationship between democratic transitions and MID initiation is robust and not just a product of careless, kitchen sink regression analysis. The introduction of incomplete democratization in dyads with territorial claims appears to increase the risk of international conflict – at least in the form of militarized disputes.

Turning to the control variables, the model in column 3 finds a negative and statistically significant relationship between power parity and MID initiation. States that have small differences in their relative power appear less likely to escalate claims to militarized disputes, perhaps due to the uncertainty of the outcome of an armed conflict. Geographic contiguity, on the other hand, heightens the risk of militarized disputes, suggesting that states that are near each other are more likely to use force when they have disputes over territorial claims with other states. The model does not produce statistically significant coefficients for the remaining control variables. Although it might at first be surprising that a higher level of joint democracy is not associated with a reduced likelihood of dispute initiation in any of the models that I have presented here, this finding becomes less curious when we consider the fact that fully mature and institutionalized democracies rarely

have territorial disagreements. As others (e.g., Gibler 2012) have demonstrated, states tend to settle their territorial disagreements before becoming fully democratic.

The models estimated in table 1 have been produced via logistic regression models. A different, and more accessible way, of presenting these results is through predicted probabilities. I calculate predicted probabilities for incomplete democratization using the full model from the third column of table 1. I move incomplete democratization from 0 to 1 while holding all other variables in the model at their respective means. Setting incomplete democratization to 0 produces a predicted probability of seeing an initiation of a militarized interstate dispute, in each year of the claim, at roughly 2.7 percent. Moving the variable to 1 produces a predicted probability of just over 4%.⁵⁵ A visual illustration of these predicted probabilities are found in figure 4, located below, and the specific probabilities on which these estimates are based can be found in table 2.

These models evaluate the merits of hypothesis 1 which suggested that territorial claim dyads are more likely to experience conflict in the presence of incomplete democratizers. The findings produced by these models appear to provide some support for the first hypothesis and the potential detrimental impact that incomplete democratization can have on the prospects for peace. These models, however, only examine the impact of ongoing democratic transitions on the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. The second hypothesis suggested that the presence of incomplete democratizers in territorial claim dyads also should exacerbate the risk of war.

I present models that are intended to address the second hypothesis in table 2, located below. These models are replications of the ones found in table 1, with a substituted dependent variable. Instead of examining the impact of incomplete democratization on militarized dispute initiation, these models investigate the potential impact of incomplete democratization on war

⁵⁵ Wald tests further indicate that there is a statistically significant difference.

escalation in each year for the territorial claim dyad. As a reminder, this variable is dichotomous and coded for years in which a territorial claim directly produced a war between the two states in the dyad and 0 otherwise.⁵⁶ The remaining variables in the models are the same as in prior versions, standard errors are clustered, and I again use a step-wise model construction to show that the results are robust regardless of model specification.

Table 1: Incomplete Democratization and War Escalation

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incomplete Transition	0.452*** (0.126)	0.471*** (0.131)	0.410** (0.128)
Major-Major		-0.362 (0.264)	-0.349 (0.264)
Joint Dem. Level		-0.0283* (0.0138)	-0.0209 (0.0128)
Power Parity			-1.270** (0.406)
Alliance			0.0404 (0.163)
Contiguity			0.589*** (0.153)
_cons	-1.848*** (0.116)	-1.939*** (0.142)	-1.318*** (0.358)
Temporal Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	11289	11103	11098
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.110	0.116	0.132

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The results produced by these models provide some support for the second hypothesis. The first model finds a positive and statistically significant effect of incomplete democratization on war initiation. The effect is significant at the 0.05-level. As before, I include additional variables in a stepwise process to the models to examine whether results are robust. In both the second and

⁵⁶ This excludes all other wars that a state might have had with other states in that same year. It also excludes wars that might have occurred within the dyad because of other causes not necessarily related to the territorial claim.

third models, incomplete democratization still exhibits a positive effect and with the same level of statistical significance.

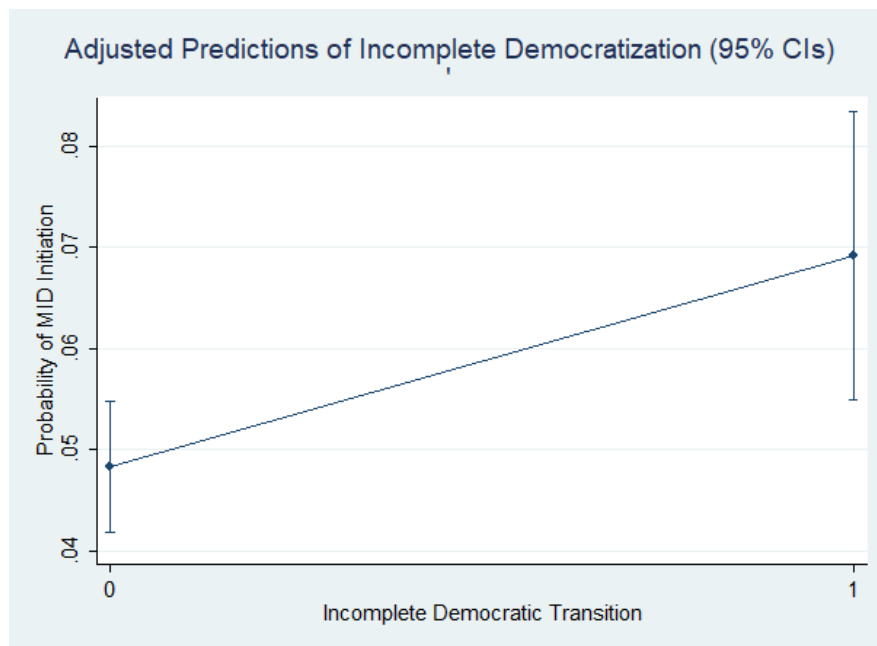


Figure 4: Predicted Probabilities for Transitions and War

A few things should be noted about the other explanatory variables that were included in the model. First, sharing an alliance decreases the likelihood that states will experience full-scale wars with each other. Sharing an alliance is therefore found to be an impediment to war whereas the previous models did not find that alliance status had any effect on MID initiation. Second, pairs of major states and states that are contiguous are more likely to fight wars over their territorial claims. Third, I do not find that power parity or dyadic level of democracy significantly impacts the likelihood of war initiation.

Turning to predicted probabilities, with all other variables held at their means, the likelihood that a territorial claim dyad will experience a war in each year is 0.035 percent in the absence of an incomplete democratic transition. Moving the variable to a 1 more than doubles the risk of war (0.068 percent). This sharp increase in the probability of war initiation on a yearly basis

suggests that there is a significant effect of incomplete democratization on the risk of full-scale conflict. These predicted probabilities are visualized in figure 5 and also displayed in table 2. Although the confidence intervals overlap, the difference between the two populations is still significant.⁵⁷ The confidence intervals surrounding the case of both incomplete democratization and war are large, which is a product of the fact that there is a small number of positive cases in which both are present.

Table 2: Incomplete Democratization and MID Initiation

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incomplete Transition	0.846** (0.287)	0.771* (0.328)	0.712* (0.319)
Major-Major		0.836* (0.367)	0.858* (0.403)
Joint Dem. Level		-0.0435 (0.0247)	-0.0320 (0.0254)
Power Parity			-0.947 (0.742)
Alliance			-0.895* (0.383)
Contiguity			0.558* (0.279)
_cons	-4.001*** (0.199)	-4.369*** (0.252)	-3.750*** (0.689)
Temporal Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	11289	11103	11098
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.064	0.068	0.082

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

⁵⁷ Although it is true that non-overlapping confidence intervals always indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the populations, it is not true that overlapping confidence intervals suggest that there is not a statistical difference.

These models produce two possible conclusions in relation to the second hypothesis. The first, and more generous interpretation, is that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict. In fact, the presence of an incomplete democratizer almost doubles the risk of war. The second, and more cautious, interpretation of these results is that although it appears that incomplete democratization is associated with a heightened risk of conflict, we should treat these carefully and allow for the fact that the effects that are described in these models are uncertain. On balance, however, I believe that these models and findings provide some modest support for the second hypothesis. Not only do incomplete democratic transitions heighten the risk of militarized disputes, but also appear to exacerbate the risk of full-scale war between states with competing territorial claims.

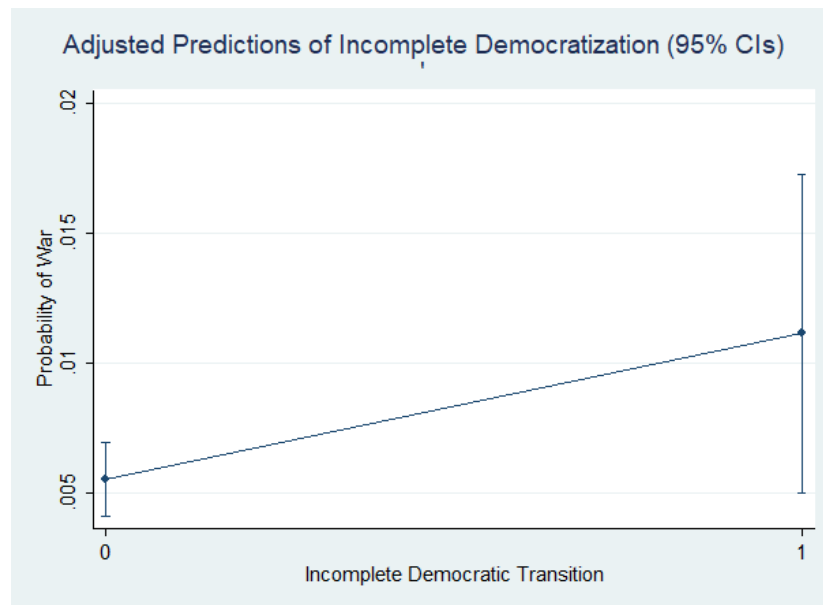


Figure 5: Predicted Probabilities for Transitions and MIDs

I also argued that we should expect to see effects of incomplete democratization on the likelihood that parties to a territorial claim will attempt to seek a peaceful settlement. Specifically, I argued that the presence of an incomplete democratizer reduces the likelihood that we will see attempts at peacefully resolving the claim. In chapter 3, this argument was summarized in

hypothesis 3. Table 3, located below, presents several models that provide us with some insight into the validity of this argument. Here, the dependent variable is a dichotomous (0 or 1) indicator for whether a peaceful settlement attempt occurred in each year. Variables for temporal dependence are also included, measuring the time that has passed since the two sides last attempted a peaceful settlement. To save space, the time variables are not reported in the table. Besides these changes, the models are replications of those that have been introduced above and include control variables for major power status, power parity, joint level of democracy, contiguity, and alliance status.

The models included in table 3 provide support for the argument. In all three models, the presence of an incomplete democratizer decreases the likelihood that states will attempt to peacefully settle their territorial disagreements. In each year of a territorial claim, incomplete democratization reduces the likelihood of incomplete democratization by 2.5 percent. These results are robust to the inclusion of additional variables as we move from the model in the first column to the full model found in the third column. As for control variables, it is notable that more democratic dyads are associated with a higher chance of a peaceful settlement attempt. This finding conforms with the theoretical expectations from the literature on the democratic peace that would suggest that more democratic states are better at avoiding conflict and managing their international disputes. Since the models in table 5.3 have been produced using logistic regression, I again produce predicted probabilities that will make the results more accessible and intuitive. The predicted probabilities are visually displayed in figure 6, located below. The predicted probability of seeing a settlement attempt in the absence of an incomplete democratizer is roughly 6.7 percent in each year. In the presence of an incomplete democratizer the probability of seeing a peaceful settlement attempt decreases to roughly 4.2 percent. The predicted probabilities and their

confidence intervals are also reproduced in table 4. The logistic regression coefficients and predicted probabilities provide strong support in favor of hypothesis 3. Incomplete democratic transitions make it less likely that we will see the parties of a territorial disagreement engage in peaceful settlement attempts.

Table 3: Incomplete Democratization and Peaceful Settlement Attempts

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Incomplete Transition	-0.442* (0.197)	-0.440* (0.203)	-0.491* (0.207)
Major-Major		0.405 (0.319)	0.227 (0.331)
Joint Dem. Level		0.0546*** (0.00986)	0.0558*** (0.01000)
Power Parity			-1.065* (0.473)
Alliance			-0.0484 (0.142)
Contiguity			0.119 (0.163)
_cons	-1.214*** (0.102)	-1.109*** (0.0977)	-0.320 (0.462)
Temporal Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>N</i>	7715	7591	7586
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.103	0.118	0.123

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

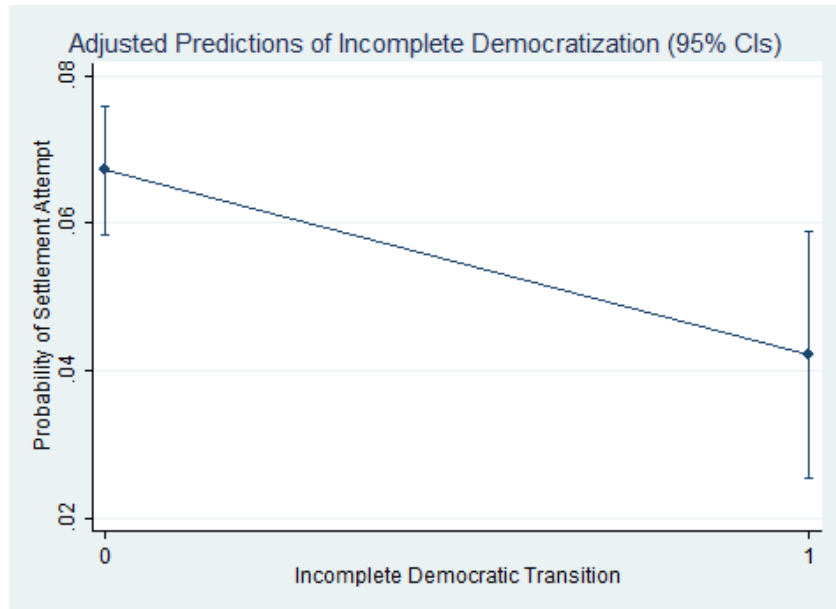


Figure 6: *Incomplete Democratization and Peaceful Settlement attempts*

Table 4: *Predicted Probabilities Summary Table*

Effect of Incomplete Democratic Transition	Low Value	High Value	Percent Change (per year)
MID Initiation (0-1)	.0271393 (.0229078-.0313708)	.0399151 (.029371-.0504592)	+ 1.27
War Initiation (0-1)	.0033598 (.0020444-.0046753)	.0068009 (.0026941-.0109078)	+ 0.35
Settlement Attempt (0-1)	.0671916 (.058489-.0758943)	.0422134 (.0255364-.0588905)	- 2.5

Variables not of interest are held at their means.

95 percent confidence interval presented in parentheses below point estimate.

5.7 Discussion

In this chapter, I have taken the first steps toward evaluating the merits of the argument I advanced in chapter 3. I suggested that we should examine potential effects of incomplete democratization on international politics and foreign policy behaviors, but that we should do so in certain contexts. Specifically, based on insights from the literature on territory in international relations, I argued that we should expect to see effects of democratic transitions where territory is a salient issue. The combination of volatile democratic transitions with salient territorial concerns

creates a dangerous cocktail that promotes nationalistic strategies by domestic players vying for power. As a result, we are more likely to see leaders turn to belligerent foreign policies that make it difficult to successfully manage territorial disagreements and maintain peace and stability. This chapter has evaluated this argument using data on democracy, conflict, and territorial claims. In short, the results presented here are largely in line with the theoretical argument and the expectations that I have derived from it.

I find evidence that pairs of states with territorial claims are more likely to see the initiation of militarized disputes and full-scale wars in the presence of at least one state that is going through a process of (incomplete) democratization. However, the effects democratic transitions are not only limited to conflict initiation and escalation. The presence of at least one democratizer also reduces the likelihood that states will seek to peacefully resolve their existing territorial claims. Viewed together, these findings provide support for the claim that ongoing processes of democratization negatively impacts the prospects for peace and stability in the international system. Entering processes of democratization makes it more likely that states will fight over territorial issues and less likely that they will attempt to seek peaceful resolutions to those issues. Policymakers and the international community should therefore be aware that efforts to promote democracy, or domestically spurred democracy movements, can impact relations between states with contested territorial claims. Armed with the knowledge that incomplete democratic transitions can have these effects, international organizations and other actors should be better able to direct their efforts and attention to those situations in which they are more likely to good and minimize the risk of doing harm. For example, from a normative perspective, democracy promotion and support for reform movements should be welcomed when the target state does not have outstanding territorial claims or disputes with other states.

It should however be emphasized that the argument that has been advanced here, and the findings that have been presented in this chapter, only pertains to contexts in which states have territorial claims. I have therefore intentionally narrowed the scope of the theoretical argument from all states, or all dyads. The seemingly narrow scope of this argument is intended to move the debate surrounding democratization and conflict forward by focusing on specific situations for which we can posit a clear and potent causal mechanism between democratization and conflict. This does however lead us to ask the following question: is the effect of incomplete democratization only limited to contexts in which actors can use territory to fan nationalistic flames? Should we expect democratization to heighten tensions in situations where states have other types of disagreements? The analyses presented in this chapter does not provide us with answers to these questions. In the next chapter, I provide a partial answer to this question by examining whether incomplete democratization has a uniform effect on the ability of states to manage disputes across different issue types.

Chapter 6: Incomplete Democratization and MID Escalation

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the ability of states to manage their territorial disagreements in the presence of incomplete democratic transitions. I presented evidence in support of the proposition that the presence of incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict and deter states from seeking peaceful resolutions to their disagreements. The main deficiency of the analyses included in Chapter 5 is the sole focus on situations where territory is a salient issue. This study would be remiss if it did not also have something to say about contexts in which other issues serve as points of contention between states. The content in this chapter extends the analysis to correct for this deficiency. Here, I examine whether the effects of incomplete democratic transitions on foreign policy vary across different issue types. I have argued that incomplete democratic transitions are uniquely likely to impact the way in which states interact over territorial issues. It is in this context that the processes created by incomplete democratization are the most likely to promote nationalism and strengthen the hand of hardliners pursuing belligerent foreign policies. Do we observe these effects when states have disagreements over other types of issues? This chapter presents a series of statistical tests that examine the impact of incomplete democratic transitions across different issue types. Specifically, I provide evidence meant to test the following hypotheses that were put forward in Chapter 3:

H4: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states will escalate to war

H5: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over a territorial issue will escalate to war

H6: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over non-territorial issues will escalate to war

H7: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states will see fatalities

H8: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over a territorial issue will see fatalities

H9: The presence of an incomplete democratizer exacerbates the risk that a militarized interstate dispute between two states over non-territorial issues will see fatalities

I find that incomplete democratization heightens the risk of conflict when states are involved in territorial disputes but that the same does not hold true for disputes over other types of issues. These findings are in line with the argument that I have advanced earlier, suggesting that the cocktail that is created by mixing territorial disputes and the volatile domestic environment of democratizing states is especially vulnerable to experience conflict. Domestic political actors vying for power can use territorial disagreements to get in front of their political competitors. Although it is possible to imagine that politicians might try to use non-territorial issues to underpin their nationalistic arguments, the ability of them to do so is more limited than if territorial issues were present. The effects of incomplete democratization are therefore different depending on the type of relationships that the democratizer has with other members of the international system. This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss the comparisons, universe of cases, and data used in the analyses. I then present the findings followed by a brief discussion of its implications and steps for future research.

6.2 Militarized Interstate Disputes and Issues

Does incomplete democratization heighten the risk of conflict across different types of disputes? Ideally, we would like to compare the same dispute between the same two countries and only substitute the issue at stake. Would a dispute over a piece of land have been resolved, or not, in the same way as it would have been if the disagreement was over fishing rights? Other economic policies? What if at least one of the involved parties in the dispute had just gone through a process of democratization? We cannot rerun history and substitute the issues at stake or randomly start assign regime types. It is, however, possible to get somewhat closer to this ideal with simple and straightforward econometric models. We want to compare disputes involving states that have recently experienced an incomplete democratic transition with disputes in which neither state has recently done so. Furthermore, we also want to be able to introduce variation in the types of issues that states exhibited disagreement over so that we can discern whether the effects of democratization are isolated to one or certain types of issues.

The Militarized Interstate Disputes dataset (version 4.1, Palmer et al. 2015) provides a universe of cases that includes variation on the types of issues that states experienced disputes over. The dataset is collected by researchers associated with the Correlates of War project and includes information about conflicts in which one or more states threaten, display or use force against one or more other states between 1816 and 2010 (Jones et al. 1996). Because disputes are inherently dyadic and involve more than one actor, I opt for using the dyad-dispute as the unit of analysis. This setup also follows existing literature on escalation in militarized disputes (e.g., Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Senese and Vasquez 2005). I utilize the MID dataset to create dyadic disputes, resulting in 2961 dyadic disputes for the period between 1816 and 2010. Recall that the theoretical argument advanced in the preceding pages suggests that the relationship between

incomplete democratization and dispute escalation will vary across issue type. The MID4 dataset contains information indicating the type of issue that was under contention in the dispute and can be used to split the sample into different subsets. However, this variable (revision type) is not available for all the disputes included in the dataset. The disputes for which we do have information on revision type are divided into subsamples based on the type of issue under contention; territorial, policy, or regime.⁵⁸ According to the MID dataset, states are more likely to become involved in disputes over policy than they are to have disputes over territory. Regime disputes are relatively uncommon compared to the other two types.

6.3 Dependent Variables

The dependent variable should identify those cases where the dispute saw escalation to a higher level of hostility. I use two different variables to capture escalation. Unfortunately, the MID dataset does not contain a dichotomous variable indicating whether a dispute escalated to war. Instead, the dataset contains a categorical hostility-variable. The variable indicates whether the dispute saw no militarized action (1), threat to use force (2), display of force (3), use of force (4), and war (5). I utilize the highest level of this variable to create the first dichotomous dependent variable for the following models. A conflict is considered to have escalated to war if the hostility variable for both states is coded as a 5. There is a total of 234 disputes that meet this criterion.

The second dependent variable is created using the fatalities variable that is included in the dataset. The fatalities variable is also categorical, with the categories from 1 through 6, where a 6 represents the deadliest conflicts and a score of 1 represents the least severe.⁵⁹ If a conflict is coded

⁵⁸ The issue type “other” is dropped from the analysis. I have no particular expectation regarding the impact of incomplete democratization on this type of disputes due to their idiosyncratic nature.

⁵⁹ The following are the differences between the fatality levels are coded in the MID dataset:

0 - None

1 - 1-25 deaths

2 - 26-100 deaths

as having reached a fatality level of 6, at least 1000 battle deaths, I code the conflict as having escalated to the level of war. This coding decision is in line with the guidelines followed by research within the broader Correlates of War Project where 1000 battle-deaths is used as the threshold for when a conflict is considered a war. There is a total of 286 disputes that meet this criterion.

6.4 Independent Variable

The main independent variable, incomplete democratization, refers to instances where a state has transitioned towards democracy from autocracy but is not yet considered a fully institutionalized democracy.⁶⁰ The variable is dichotomous and based on the Polity IV dataset (Marshall et al. 2002). This variable is coded as 1 if a state has crossed over the threshold for anocracy (-5 to +5) from autocracy (-6 and below) in the past five years. If no such transition has taken place, the variable is coded as 0.⁶¹

6.5 Control Variables

I include several control variables in the regression analyses that are presented here. The democratic peace tradition holds that democracy reduces the likelihood of conflict (e.g., Doyle 1986, Maoz and Russett 1993, Dixon 1994, Russett and Oneal 2001). Using a weakest link approach, I include the lower level of democracy, according to Polity, of either participant in a dispute. The expectation is that higher levels of democracy is associated with a decreased likelihood that a dispute will experience more severe conflict and violence. In addition to regime

3 - 101-250 deaths
4 - 251-500 deaths
5 - 501-999 deaths
6 - > 999 deaths

⁶⁰ See Chapter 4 for a detailed description of this variable and associated data.

⁶¹ A portion of the Polity data is also coded as not available or otherwise cannot be used here. This is, for example, the case for certain civil wars and other situations where there either is not a formally recognized government, or it is unclear which group that is governing the country. These are dropped from the analyses.

type, scholars examining militarized interstate disputes have focused on differences in status and power between states involved in the dispute. For example, Bremer, in his seminal study on dangerous dyads, includes major power status as one of his predictors of conflict (Bremer 1992). Theoretically, major powers and minor powers are likely to interact differently with each other due to their discrepant abilities to threaten and use force. I include two variables to account for major power status. The first is an indicator variable that takes the value of 1 if both parties to the dispute are major powers, 0 otherwise. The second variable takes on a value of 1 if the dispute dyad includes one major and one minor power, 0 otherwise. I also include an additional variable that accounts for power parity between the two parties in a dispute. Finally, Bremer (1992) observed that states bordering each other are much more likely to become involved in international conflict. In his analysis, covering the period from 1816 through 1965, contiguous states were 35 times more likely to fight a war than non-contiguous states. A dichotomous variable indicating whether a pair of states are contiguous or not is therefore taken into consideration here.

6.6 Findings

Table 6.1, located below, presents three different models that use MID hostility levels to code war escalation as the dependent variable. The columns, from left to right, present results using different subsamples based on the issue under contention. The first column presents results for the territorial subsample while the other two presents models for policy and regime disputes, respectively. The first row examines the relationship between incomplete democratization and war escalation for each of the different subsamples. In column 1, incomplete democratic transition is positively associated with a higher likelihood of escalation to war in territorial disputes. This coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The presence of at least one incomplete democratizer in a dispute dyad appears to heighten the risk of conflict. However, this is not the

case for either policy or regime disputes. Although the coefficient found in column 2 suggests that there is a positive relationship between incomplete democratization and escalation to war in policy disputes, this variable is not statistically significant. In the third column, I display the same analysis for the sample of regime disputes and incomplete democratization and war escalation. The coefficient for incomplete democratization found in this column points in the other direction, suggesting that incomplete democratization reduces the likelihood of conflict when states have disputes relating to regime issues. However, this coefficient is not statistically significant.

Turning to the control variables, it appears that joint major powers increase the likelihood that states will fight wars over their disputes compared to dyads that only include minor states. Similarly, dyads containing both a major and a minor state are less likely to escalate disputes to war than jointly minor dyads, although the coefficient is not statistically significant. Power parity is associated with a higher likelihood of war in policy disputes but not in either of the other two dispute types. Higher levels of democracy in dyads that have territorial disputes is associated with a lower likelihood that the dispute is going to escalate to a state of war. Although this coefficient is negative in both the second and third columns, the effect is not statistically significant.

The models presented in table 6.2 show the results for the same analysis using the other dependent variable. Instead of coding war escalation based on hostility levels, I here used the recorded fatality numbers. The models that use this dependent variable tell a story that is very similar to the one that we just saw. The presence of an incomplete democratizer increases the likelihood of a dispute seeing more violent conflict, but it only does so in the first column of table 6.2. The effect of incomplete democratization on escalation for territorial disputes is significant at the 0.001 level and in a positive direction. I do not find this effect for either policy or regime

disputes. In both cases, the coefficient is non-significant and, in the case of policy disputes in the second column, the coefficient is negative.

Table 5: Incomplete Democratization and MID Escalation

	(1) Territory	(2) Policy	(3) Regime
Transition	0.885* (0.394)	0.867 (0.460)	-0.733 (1.150)
Major-Major	1.728*** (0.491)	-0.214 (0.684)	-1.709* (0.857)
Mixed	-0.415 (0.430)	0.365 (0.708)	
Level of Democracy	-0.107*** (0.0292)	-0.0938* (0.0453)	-0.0993 (0.102)
Power Parity	-0.000000579 (0.00000153)	0.000000721* (0.000000331)	-0.00000164 (0.000000960)
Contiguity	-0.543 (0.300)	-0.120 (0.528)	-0.0960 (0.749)
_cons	-2.818*** (0.367)	-4.109*** (0.575)	-2.459** (0.782)
<i>N</i>	661	1186	193
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.143	0.028	0.083

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Dyadic disputes in which both parties are major powers appear to be more willing to fight each other when the issue under contention is over territory. If the dispute is over policy or regime, conflict becomes less likely. The democratic peace argument receives some support from these models. Jointly democratic dyads are less likely to find themselves in militarized interstate disputes with many casualties. Contiguity is negatively associated with escalation to war and significant in two of the models displayed here.

Table 6: Incomplete Democratization and MID Escalation (Fatalities)

	(1) Territory	(2) Policy	(3) Regime
Transition	1.531*** (0.450)	-0.529 (1.041)	0.741 (0.852)
Major-Major	2.165*** (0.493)	-1.271* (0.639)	-15.55*** (1.113)
Mixed	-0.507 (0.422)	0.282 (0.643)	14.12*** (1.197)
Level of Democracy	-0.0978** (0.0300)	-0.457** (0.149)	-0.219** (0.0805)
Power Parity	0.000000829 (0.00000112)	-0.00000441 (0.00000296)	-0.00000344 (0.00000251)
Contiguity	-0.815* (0.322)	-0.606 (0.578)	-1.799* (0.804)
_cons	-3.041*** (0.397)	-5.975*** (1.283)	-1.718** (0.595)
<i>N</i>	586	1050	123
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.184	0.138	0.128

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The remaining analyses in this chapter shifts the focus to fatal militarized disputes. Instead of using war escalation as the dependent variable, I here include an indicator variable for whether a dispute saw any fatalities. Many disputes, even though they do not see over a thousand deaths, still experience a significant number of fatalities and are captured with this dependent variable. Table 6.3 presents the main results for this analysis and examines whether there is an effect of incomplete democratization on the likelihood that a militarized interstate dispute will experience fatalities. The variables that are included in the analyses are the same as earlier in the chapter. The findings presented in these models do not provide support for the proposition that incomplete

democratization increases the risk of fatalities in militarized interstate disputes. Comparing the different coefficients in the three columns suggest that incomplete democratization is positively associated with fatalities in disputes, but this variable is not statistically significant unless one were to use a very generous upper limit for statistical significance (p-value of 0.074). The coefficient is negative in both other columns of table 6.3, suggesting that states are less likely to fight over disputes when they are going through an incomplete democratization. However, this is only statistically significant for regime disputes (at the 0.001-level).

Table 7: Incomplete Democratization and Fatal MIDs

	(1) Territory	(2) Policy	(3) Regime
Transition	0.625 (0.348)	-0.357 (0.393)	-1.438* (0.687)
Major-Major	0.591 (0.415)	-1.168* (0.588)	-0.569 (0.422)
Mixed	0.113 (0.403)	1.109 (0.605)	
Level of Democracy	-0.0566** (0.0206)	-0.0642** (0.0228)	-0.0707 (0.0623)
Power Parity	0.00000126 (0.00000106)	-0.000000740 (0.000000734)	-0.00000249* (0.00000104)
Contiguity	0.00889 (0.253)	0.900*** (0.266)	0.782 (0.486)
_cons	-1.456*** (0.278)	-2.717*** (0.273)	-0.317 (0.517)
<i>N</i>	586	1050	123
pseudo R^2	0.035	0.050	0.076

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

With the notable exception of level of democracy, the control variables are not consistent across models. Major powers appear to be more likely to see fatalities in their disputes, but this

coefficient is not statistically significant. However, the middle column of table 6.3 suggests that major powers are less likely to fight over policy disputes. This finding is statistically significant at the 0.005 level. There is also a non-significant and negative relationship between major-major dyads and fatalities in regime disputes. Finally, contiguity is positively associated with fatalities in interstate disputes, but this coefficient is only statistically significant in the second column which includes the model for policy disputes.

To aid with the interpretation of the results that have been presented above, I include predicted probabilities in the following three tables. In table 8, located below, I present the predicted probabilities for three different dependent models when incomplete democratization is moved from 0 to 1. The probabilities have been calculated using the full models presented earlier in this chapter. In the first row of table 8, we see that incomplete democratization increases the risk of war with over 11 percent, from about 11 to 22 percent, in territorial MIDs compared to disputes where incomplete democratization is not present. In other words, the introduction of incomplete democratization into a territorial dispute dyad doubles the risk of war in the dyad.

The second row shows the estimates for policy disputes, with a non-significant increase of 3.4 percent. The regime dispute model used to estimate predicted probabilities in the third row suggests that the introduction of incomplete democratization in a regime dispute reduces the likelihood of war by about 2.4 percent. I also present the coefficients for the alternative measurement of war escalation in table 9. The substantive story is the same as in table 8. The presence of an incomplete democratizer increases the probability that a territorial dispute will experience war while it does not appear that incomplete democratization has the same effect on policy or regime disputes. In table 10, we see the predicted probabilities for models presented in table 7, located above. Here, there is a large and positive, but statistically insignificant effect, of

incomplete democratization on the likelihood that a militarized interstate dispute will experience a fatality. There is also a large, and significant, negative effect of democratization on the likelihood of fatalities in regime disputes.

6.7 Discussion

How should the results presented in this chapter be interpreted and how should we judge the merits of the hypotheses that were posed at the beginning of this chapter? A few things stand out. First, incomplete democratization does not appear to increase the likelihood that states involved in interstate disputes will experience conflict across the board. Instead, the analyses presented in this chapter suggest that the effect is conditional on other factors such as the type of issue that is being contested in the specific dispute. Hypothesis 4 is therefore not supported by the findings that presented in this chapter. Second, democratization does increase the likelihood of war when states have disputes over territory. I have previously argued that these are the scenarios in which we should, theoretically, expect to find effects of incomplete democratization on conflict. The analyses presented above used two different dependent variables to code war escalation of disputed and both models provided support for hypothesis 5. However, incomplete democratization is not found to have a relationship with war escalation in situations where states have disputes over non-territorial issues, which means that hypothesis 6 is left without support based on the models presented here.

Table 8: Predicted Probabilities for Transitions and War

Effect of Incomplete Democratic Transition	Low Value	High Value	Percent Change (per year)
Territorial Disputes	.1044416 (.0765664-.1323167)	.2204003 (.1149163-.3458842)	+ 11.6
Policy Disputes	.0265954 (.0164747-.036716)	.0610415 (.01480231-.1072808)	+ 3.4
Regime Disputes	.2658984 (.1047344-.3603941)	.2422134 (.0955698-.3233744)	- 2.4

Variables not of interest are held at their means.

95 percent confidence interval presented in parentheses below point estimate.

Table 9: Predicted Probabilities for Transitions and War (Fatalities)

Effect of Incomplete Democratic Transition	Low Value	High Value	Percent Change (per year)
Territorial Disputes	.0850662 (.0558136-.1143188)	.3006988 (.1326134-.4687842)	+ 21.6
Policy Disputes	.0084951 (-.0010555-.0180458)	.0050218 (-.0093233-.0193669)	+ 3.4
Regime Disputes	.1211879 (.0562441-.1861316)	.224396 (-.0456945-.4944865)	- 2.4

Variables not of interest are held at their means.

95 percent confidence interval presented in parentheses below point estimate.

Table 10: Predicted Probabilities for Transitions and Fatal MIDs

Effect of Incomplete Democratic Transition	Low Value	High Value	Percent Change (per year)
Territorial Disputes	.3009456 (.2541149-.3477762)	.4456808 (.2804617-.6108999)	+ 14.5
Policy Disputes	.0963224 (.0737283-.1189165)	.06944138 (.021103-.1177795)	- 2.7
Regime Disputes	.4790011 (.3842732-.5737289)	.1777696 (-.0017954-.3573346)	- 30.0

Variables not of interest are held at their means.

95 percent confidence interval presented in parentheses below point estimate.

Moving beyond escalation to war, the last three hypotheses proposed that there is an additional relationship between incomplete democratization and conflict at a lower level of intensity. The hypotheses propose that democratic transitions heighten the risk of disputes seeing

fatalities. The results of these models suggest that incomplete democratization again does not have what could be considered a generalizable effect across all disputes on the dependent variable. Although transitions are positively associated with fatalities in territorial disputes, this finding is not statistically significant. Meanwhile, democratization is negatively associated with fatalities in policy and regime disputes. This means that hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 are left without support based on this analysis. However, it should be noted that the direction of the effects is in line with the direction predicted by the theory, and that the coefficient for territorial disputes approaches statistical significance.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Summary

This project started with the observation that, in the time that has passed since the Second World War ended, we have witnessed a five-fold increase in the number of democratic states populating the world. The increase in democracies parallels that of increased trade, proliferation of international organizations, and has generally been considered an integral part of the liberal world order that was established in the post-World War era. The growth in the number of democracies did not pass unnoticed. Scholars have expended significant time and effort in their attempt to understand foreign policy behaviors and patterns of democracies. After countless publications, scholars working within this research program eventually started to approach something akin to a consensus, arriving at the now widely accepted democratic peace-proposition. Pairs of institutionalized and mature democracies simply do not fight each other. Although we have advanced our knowledge about democracies in international relations, I have made the argument that scholars, the efforts of a select few aside, have paid relatively little attention to states that find themselves in democratic transitions. This dissertation is part of an endeavor to improve our knowledge about democratic transitions and their impact on international politics. Building on existing research, I presented an argument and derived a set of hypotheses linking democratization to specific foreign policy outcomes depending on the context in which the transition takes place. The associated empirical tests show that processes of democratization do impact the prospects of peace and exacerbate the risk of conflict in predictable ways.

This study moves our knowledge of democratization forward by considering the specific situation in which democratization, based on the logic found in existing theories, should have an impact on the foreign policy behavior of states in the international system. It should be noted that

I have not put forward, or tested, general propositions about the dangers, or virtues, of democratization. Instead, I suggested that there are certain contexts in which we should expect democratic transitions to impact foreign policy outcomes. Building on existing arguments (e.g., Mansfield and Snyder 2005), I argued that democratization will lead to belligerent foreign policies and reduce the prospects of peace in contexts where territory is a salient issue. The combination of authoritarian breakdowns, which are characterized by the emergence of more inclusive political systems where political actors must compete for support, with salient territorial issues produce domestic political environments where those vying for power will turn to nationalistic strategies to gain an advantage over their political competition. The embrace of nationalistic strategies, in turn, exacerbate the difficulties of resolving disagreements with other states and heightens the risk of conflict. This tweak to the theoretical argument allows us to identify specific contexts in which democratization is likely to lead to nationalism and belligerent foreign policies and those in which democratic transitions are less likely to have the same impact on foreign policy behavior. By narrowing the scope, and not focusing on a general relationship between democratization and conflict, this study moves the debate forward and improves our understanding of international politics.

Considering these findings, we should think of democratization as a process that can have widely different outcomes depending on the context in which it takes place. Not all instances of democratization will necessarily increase the risk of conflict or make it more difficult for states to cooperate with each other. There are situations in which democratization can increase the risk of conflict and others in which the effects might be minimal or not exist at all. Armed with this knowledge, policy makers should be aware of the consequences of promoting democratic reform movements in various corners of the globe and the impact that such changes can have on

international politics. In what follows, I briefly reiterate the theoretical argument and summarize the findings produced in this study. I close with a discussion of its contributions and implications for both scholars and policy makers.

7.2 Democratization and International Politics

Existing arguments examining the impact of democratic transitions in international politics have primarily been concerned with whether democratization increases or decreases the risk of war. Mansfield and Snyder famously argued, in multiple publications, that processes of democratization increase the risk of war due to weak institutions that are unable to manage the fierce political competitions that emerges between different domestic groups attempting to gain political influence in the new political regime. Crucially, their theory suggested that political actors in this setting turn to nationalistic arguments in their efforts to mobilize domestic support and gain the upper hand on their domestic political competitors. In chapter 3, I provided a nuanced argument, suggesting that democratization can heighten the risk international conflict and complicate the peaceful management of international disputes, but that it does so in certain contexts.

It is possible that processes of democratization heighten the risk of conflict and make it harder for states to manage international disagreements. However, that this more likely to be the case in specific contexts. I argue that processes of democratization make international conflict more likely in situations where democratizing states experience external threats that domestic political actors can use to further their own agenda. The presence of salient territorial issues allows political actors to use nationalistic rhetoric which in turn leads to the implementation of hardline and belligerent foreign policies. As a result, it becomes harder to peacefully resolve international

disagreements and violent conflict becomes a more probable outcome. I proposed testing this argument using empirical data on territorial claims and militarized disputes.

7.3 Democratization and Territorial Claims

Chapter 5 directly examines the merits of the argument and associated hypotheses in the setting of territorial claims. Does incomplete democratization impact the ability of states to peacefully manage, and settle, their territorial disagreements? Using existing data on territorial claims from the Issue Correlates of War project, the empirical analyses produced two conclusions. First, democratization is associated with a heightened risk of international conflict in years where incomplete democratization is present. In years where at least one of the two parties to a territorial claim is in a democratic transition, the risk of both militarized interstate disputes and full-scale wars is exacerbated. Second, the presence of incomplete democratization also reduces the likelihood that states will attempt to reach a peaceful settlement of their disagreements. Together, these findings paint a rather bleak picture for the prospects of peace and stability in settings where territorial issues are salient. Not only does the risk of conflict increase, but we are also less likely to see parties engage in efforts to find peaceful resolutions.

7.4 Democratization Across Issues

Chapter 5 only considered the impact of incomplete democratization in situations where territory was a salient issue. In chapter 6, I turned my attention to the potential impact of democratization across a wider range of issues. Is it the case that democratization only impacts the relations between states in situations where territory is the salient issue, or do we observe the same pattern across other types of issues? I suggested that we are not likely to see the same effects of democratization when other issues are being contested, due to other issues not lending themselves as easily to nationalistic demagoguery, but that we ultimately can investigate this empirically. I

used the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset to identify distinct issues that states have been involved in disputes over. The three main categories of disputes that I identified using the MID dataset include territorial, policy, and regime disputes. I then examined the impact of incomplete democratic transitions on the likelihood that these disputes would escalate to war. Corroborating the results from chapter 5, the associated statistical analyses again show that democratization exacerbates the risk of conflict for territorial issues in the form of war. These analyses did not find evidence supporting the notion that incomplete democratization impacts the risk of conflict when the issue at stake falls in the policy or regime categories. In short, chapter 6 showed us that the impact of incomplete democratization varies across different issue types.

7.5 Caveats, Limitations, and Solutions

As is the nature of every research project in the social sciences, this study does not claim to have uncovered the definite truth and final answers to the questions that it attempted to answer. The world is a messy place and the social scientist can only do so much in his or her attempt to untangle relationships between different variables and phenomena. Three caveats and shortcomings should be particularly highlighted when we weigh the results and implications of this study. First, has this study truly and fully tested the posited causal mechanism? Second, I want to highlight limitations regarding the peaceful settlement data. Lastly, the argument and associated hypotheses that I have put forward and tested are restricted and limited in scope and should not be construed otherwise. In addition to highlighting these limitations, I also propose avenues for future projects that could help alleviate these concerns.

The evidence that I have presented in this study is statistical and produced through linear regression models. These models, and the data that has been used, do not directly measure nationalism and whether political actors do in fact use nationalist arguments in their electoral

strategies. What the models show, is that the presence of incomplete democratization is associated with a heightened risk of conflict and a reduced likelihood of peaceful settlement attempts – where territory is a salient issue. These effects do not appear to be present in contexts where states have disagreements over other types of issues. While these results are compatible with the argument advanced in chapter 3, I do not pretend to have conclusively shown that territorial issues give rise to nationalistic strategies. An approach to identify and trace the causal mechanism at play in democratic transitions is to use qualitative case studies. This is the approach taken by Mansfield and Snyder (2005) in their earlier work on the topic. I have used anecdotal evidence and stories throughout this project to illustrate theoretical points and parts of the argument at various points. These anecdotes, however, do not amount to a systematic, qualitative examination of whether the posited causal mechanism is taking place. The current scope and timeframe of the dissertation has not been amenable for the inclusion of carefully designed case studies. Instead of viewing this as a fatal flaw in the current study, a more positive approach is to consider it an opportunity for extension and future research. Moving forward, it would be useful to conduct case studies and obtain qualitative evidence that illustrate when the causal mechanism is at play. Equally important, however, is to gain insight into cases where the expected causal story did not take place. Why is it that certain states, even when they became involved in territorial disagreements, managed to avoid the negative influence of democratic transitions while others did not? Answers to this question could be found in the democratic transition itself, the territorial issue at stake, or in some other characteristic of the states involved in the disagreement. Carefully investigating a number of cases would provide us with additional answers.

Is it possible to create a quantitative, cross-national measurement for nationalism? Currently, no dataset exists that accurately measures the level of nationalism across countries that

could be used to gauge levels of nationalism in democratic transitions. One way of creating such a dataset is to utilize news reports that catalogue news reports from around the globe. For example, the Cline Center at the University of Illinois has experience with collecting such data and their extensive Global News Archive draws on over 90 million historical news reports from around the world. By searching through these news reports, it is possible to construct a measurement of the level of nationalism associated with certain countries and/or specific politicians. Politicians that use nationalism as a strategy are likely to phrase policies and statements in certain terms. They are for example more likely to use language that speaks of in and out-groups, the greatness of the nation, or national community. Text analysis of news reports can also gain us insight into whether candidates that engage in nationalism use territorial issues as a way of making their nationalistic arguments. While this kind of data gathering appears to be a promising venture, we should also keep in mind that the media landscape in countries that have until recently been characterized by authoritarian governments will look different from what we are used to in North America or Western Europe. Media coverage might be more sparse, inexperienced, or still have ties to the government. However, gathering data on nationalism through news reports does not have to be limited to democratic transitions. A global measurement for levels of nationalism, either on the level of the state, individuals, or political parties, is helpful beyond this context and can be used by international relations scholars and comparative scholars alike to answer a plethora of different research questions.

The second caveat that ought to be mentioned here concerns the limited availability of data on peaceful settlement attempts. Data on settlement attempts were drawn from the Issue Correlates of War project (ICOW). ICOW strives to collect systematic data on contentious issues in world politics. Data on these issues have been collected from 1816 through 2001. However, the collection

of data on peaceful settlement attempts is currently underway and only available for the Western Hemisphere and European regions. The findings relating to peaceful settlements attempts should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. It is possible that the effect of incomplete democratization on settlement attempts only is restricted to these regions and not present elsewhere. The existence of certain international organizations, political cultures, economic or other factors, might be driving the results for these, predominantly Western, countries. Future work should use additional data gathered by ICOW scholars to test whether the findings presented here also hold for the rest of the world.

Lastly, I also want to be clear regarding the claims that can be made based on the findings presented in this project. The argument that I advanced, and the associated hypotheses, are intentionally narrow. I have argued that we should expect incomplete democratization to negatively impact the ability of states to manage international disagreements in contexts where territorial issues are salient. In chapter 5, I show that the presence of an incomplete democratizer makes conflict between states with territorial disagreements more likely and peaceful settlement attempts less so. I corroborated these findings in chapter 6 when I showed that incomplete democratic transitions are associated with an increased risk of war in militarized disputes over territory. This is therefore not an argument which claims that incomplete democratization in general makes belligerent foreign policies and conflict more likely in the international system. In fact, I have suggested that the processes linking democratization to a higher likelihood of war is highly contextual and not always present. In chapter 6, I do not find any impact of incomplete democratic transitions on the likelihood that non-territorial disputes will escalate to war. This study does not settle the debate regarding the impact of incomplete democratization on international politics. It does, however, move the debate forward by providing evidence of the impact of

incomplete democratic transitions in a specific context. This study does however leave open additional questions that should be pursued in future research such as whether there are other contexts in which incomplete democratization make it easier for political actors to make nationalistic arguments which lead to belligerent foreign policies?

This study should also not be taken as an evaluation of the main findings of the democratic peace tradition. There is an abundance of evidence for the proposition that a certain class of states has managed to nearly eliminate conflict from their interactions with each other. The argument that I have made in previous chapters is specifically concerned with the abrupt change that comes with the breakdown of authoritarian states and the initiation of democratic transitions. This is a set of states, or cases, for which traditional explanations associated with the democratic peace tradition do not provide us with clear guidance. The argument, analyses, and claims that I make throughout this project is limited to this set of cases and should not be interpreted as sweeping a generalization about all forms of democratic governance.

7.6 Future Research

The previous paragraphs have outlined a few potential avenues for extensions and future research that are based on potential shortcomings in the current project. There are several other extensions and projects that can and should follow in the footsteps of this study. I am here going to briefly discuss four of these. First, it is possible to think of and identify other situations in which territorial concerns are salient where we should expect incomplete democratization to have similar effects. Second, do democratizers actively seek out and try to fabricate territorial disagreements with other states? A third project should also examine whether it that democratizing states exhibit behaviors in other foreign policy areas, such as arms races and alliances, that lie beyond the context of conflict initiation and peaceful settlement of conflicts. Lastly, I believe that the possible link

between nationalism and territory should be further investigated, for example through survey experiments.

The first extension proposal recognizes that there are other contexts in which there could be salient threats from external actors and situations in which territorial concerns exist. A potential starting point for extensions in this vein can be found in recent scholarship by Andrew Owsiak. Owsiak has studied situations where states have not been able to reach binding agreements over their joint borders. States often arrive at de facto settlements of joint borders without having officially entered into legally binding, or de jure, agreements. The logic outlined in the dissertation suggests that leaders in democratizing states are faced with considerable challenges, making it harder for them to resolve territorial issues such as border disputes with other states. Reaching a legally binding agreement to permanently cede territory to foreign entities is likely to undermine the government's domestic position and invite nationalistic challenges by political opponents. I therefore expect that leaders of states that find themselves in an incomplete democratic transition are less willing to pursue agreements that permanently settle these borders. It is also easy to imagine that leaders may even attempt to use unsettled borders to heighten international tensions.

Second, this project has not addressed the possibility that leaders in democratizing states can attempt to fabricate disagreements with other states to gin up nationalistic support domestically. In chapter 3, I suggest that this is a possibility. However, I also believe that it remains a daunting task to invent disagreements with other states out of whole cloth that also have the capacity to capture the imagination of the population at large. It is possible that leaders could attempt to stake claims on foreign territories, but if there is no historical connection to the region or other form of attachment, it is unlikely that large swathes of the population will take the claim seriously or rally behind a leader who is interested in staking these claims. This does not, of course,

preclude the possibility that they might attempt to do so or that they might in rare cases even be successful. Whether leaders in democratizing states engage in this type of diversionary foreign policy to mobilize support, and whether it also benefits them from a mobilization perspective, are questions that seem promising for future work.

Additional research would also benefit from examining a broader range of foreign policy behaviors associated with democratizing states. Existing literature has predominantly examined the relationship between ongoing democratization and conflict, omitting other outcomes of interest. This is a curious omission in the literature when one considers the fact that extensive scholarship has examined the behavior of new, fully institutionalized democracies. I am interested in pursuing questions that ask whether democratizing states are likely to engage in various foreign policy practices. Do these states sign military alliances? Seek membership in international organizations? Or get involved in arms races? These are all questions to which we have scant scholarship to which we can turn to gain insight. Based on the causal logic that I discuss in my dissertation, I suggest that we should not be surprised to find that incomplete democratization hinders international involvement, promote militaristic or realpolitik solutions to international problems, and/or lead to isolationism.

Lastly, future research should also farther examine the link between nationalism and territorial issues. Are territorial disagreements with other states more likely to gin up nationalistic sentiments among the population than disagreements over other types of issues? Can we establish a link between foreign territorial disputes and increased domestic nationalism? I propose that we can shed some light on this relationship through survey experiments. Through randomized survey experiments, we can expose subjects to different types of disputes and observe whether there is any impact on their feelings toward their country or foreign countries. The ability to use survey

experiments, for example through university subject pools or online panels, makes this a very plausible and potentially rewarding project.

7.7 Implications and Conclusions

I started this project with the observation that there has been a five-fold increase in the number of democracies since the end of the Second World War. Recognizing that states do not magically transform into fully institutionalized democracies overnight, this project has attempted to shed some light on how incomplete and ongoing democratic transitions impact international politics. A significant number of states have, however, not experienced a democratic transition but could do so in the future. Although it is the case that we currently see more institutionalized and established democracies around the globe than we have before, there are still many states that potentially could make a journey towards democracy in the future. Understanding how these transitions impact international politics, and the states that enter the transitions, ought to be of non-trivial interest to scholars of international relations.

I combine insights from the literature on democratization and conflict with recent scholarship on territorial issues in international politics to highlight a specific context in which democratic transitions can heighten the risk of conflict and reduce the chances of peaceful relations. I proposed several hypotheses that posited relationships between democratic transitions to interstate conflict and conflict management. The associated analyses show that incomplete democratization, in certain contexts, has profound impacts on the ability of states to maintain peace and stability. I want to highlight two ways in which this study has contributed to our knowledge of international politics. First, it advances our scholarly knowledge of democratic transitions and their impact on the prospects of peace in the international system. Second, the findings presented

in this study also provides us with insights into how states handle territorial issues and identify a specific factor, incomplete democratization, that heightens the risk of conflict over territory.

The debate over democratization and conflict stagnated after a vibrant initial debate between Mansfield and Snyder, on one side, and their critics on the other. Mansfield and Snyder received significant pushback when they suggested that incomplete democratic transitions, contrary to the conventionally held wisdom at the time, exacerbate the risk of conflict between states. They argued that the domestic political processes inherent in democratic transitions are fertile ground for nationalistic political strategies that lead to belligerent foreign policies. Although I find this argument theoretically compelling, I argued that there are certain situations in which it appears more applicable. Specifically, this is likely to be the case in situations where territorial issues are salient. The hypotheses and associated findings that have been presented here moves this debate forward in an innovative way by focusing on the effects of democratization in specific contexts. By narrowing the scope of the theoretical argument and identifying specific situations in which transitions heighten the risk of conflict, we have gained new insights into how democratic transitions can impact international politics. This study, beyond having advanced our knowledge of the relationship between democratization and conflict, shows the virtues of taking theoretical arguments seriously and thinking carefully about where they might apply. This approach should be a model for other scholars that are interested in democratic transitions and the way in which they impact international relations.

This study also contributes to the growing research program on territory in international relations. Starting in 1992, with Paul Diehl urging scholars to take issues in international politics seriously, scholars have devoted considerable attention to how states interact and manage different types of issues. The way in which states handle territorial issues, and the link between territorial

issues and conflict, has been at the center of this research program since its inception. Territory emerged as the center of attention in the issue research program due to several studies having observed that territorial issues appear to be particularly conflict prone. For example, Holsti (1991) found that three-fourths of all wars involved contention over territory as opposed to other issues while Huth (2009) highlights the fact that contention over territory consistently accounts for about one-third of all militarized interstate disputes. Datasets such as the Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset began to separate disputes according to issue type while the Issue Correlates of War project specifically strived to identify and catalogue issues in international politics.

In this study, I have used both datasets to identify a universe of cases in which I can test the proposed hypotheses. Scholars have primarily studied different ways in which territorial issues are resolved and differences between territorial disagreements and other types of issues. Questions asking why certain territorial issues escalate to war or see peaceful resolution have primarily examined differences between authoritarian and mature democratic states, paying scant attention to states that are currently going through a transition. This study adds to the issue research program by examining a specific factor, ongoing democratic transitions, and how it impacts the ability of states to manage and peacefully resolve their territorial disagreements. Although it is true that the world has experienced fewer international conflicts in the past few decades, it remains the case that territorial disagreements are still highly salient issues in international politics, including high profile disputes over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, or Transnistria. Studying territorial issues and the factors that allow states to successfully manage territorial disagreements can aid the resolution of these issues and a scholarly endeavor that could have tangible real-world impacts.

More specifically from a policy perspective, this study provides guidance for the international community on where to invest resources and what the potential consequences of democratic transitions are. Leaders and policymakers that push policies of democracy promotion should stop and contemplate if we fully understand the forces that processes of democratization can unleash in the countries where it takes place. Normatively, Western leaders and populations are likely to find democracy promotion and support for reform movements around the world to be desirable policy. I would suggest, based on the findings in this dissertation, that resources supporting democratization should be invested in states that do not have international territorial disagreements with other states. Promoting democratization in environments where politicians vying for votes are likely to use nationalistic strategies to mobilize support can heighten the risk of international conflict and make it harder for states to peacefully resolve their differences. Similarly, the international community should pursue policies that help authoritarian states resolve their territorial disagreements with others.

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